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*AN EPISTLE TO A CANARY.<sup>1</sup>*

[THE manuscript of the ensuing 'Epistle to a Canary' has not hitherto been printed, or even described. The verses, in the handwriting of the author, were preserved among the Browning MSS. until their dispersal after Robert Barrett Browning's death. The 'Epistle' bears no title, place, or date, but it is not difficult to reconstruct its history with some exactness. There can be no doubt that it was addressed to Mary Russell Mitford's pet canary, from 74 Gloucester Place, Portman Square, the Barretts' London house since 1835. The acquaintance of Miss Barrett with Miss Mitford began in May 1836. Formal at first, in a few months it ripened into a close and tender intimacy. Late in January 1837 the country friend paid a visit, apparently her first, to 74 Gloucester Place, and saw the various pets, and the ways of the Barrett family, a knowledge of which seems presupposed in the 'Epistle.' It was about this time that Elizabeth wrote her poem, 'The Doves,' which was published in 'The Seraphim' of 1838, beginning

*My little doves have left a nest  
Upon an Indian tree.*

It is one of this pair of doves who is supposed to indite the epistle to Miss Mitford's canary. Both ladies expatiated in their correspondence on the merits of their 'dear pets,' and letters exist in which they have sentimentally exchanged canary-feathers. Miss Mitford boasted herself a 'complete bird-fancier.' I think it possible that the present 'Epistle' may be connected with that 'story of the Doves' which Mary Russell Mitford acknowledges in a letter of February 22, 1837. At all events the 'Epistle' must be earlier in date than August 16, 1837, when Elizabeth Barrett announced that 'a new little dove had appeared from a

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shell, over which nobody had prognosticated good.' It is incredible that, if so thrilling an occurrence had already taken place when the 'Epistle' was written, no mention should be made of it by the enthusiastic parent.

The poem is one of many loose and pleasant private missives in verse which Miss Barrett indulged in during those early years. It is valuable from the information it gives about the household at Gloucester Place, the birds, the dog Myrtle, William the butler, the shrouded and limited existence of the poet, with its windows wide open to the horizons of the imagination.—EDMUND GOSSE.]

Dear unknown friend, esteemed Canary !  
 I've read your letter sent by Mary.  
 I've read it with sufficient pleasure  
 To draw a joyous choral measure  
 From all the birds in Vallombrosa,—  
 A place you've heard of, I suppose, Sir.

My Spouse and I accept the honor  
 You put upon me and upon her,  
 And here with equal cordiality  
 Return our friendship's mutuality.  
 It is indeed a high communion,  
 When hearts of birds can meet in union,  
 And mine beneath my wing is beating,  
 Just like a lark's, the sunshine greeting,  
 To think that I, whose sun's a masked one,  
 Have still your friendship to be basked in ;  
 That I and my companion, fated  
 To be for aye expatriated,  
 To sit at London windows, viewing,  
 For fair green hills, the human ruin,  
 Hearing, for river-songs, wind-catches,—  
 'Old clothes, old clothes,' and 'Buy my matches,'—  
 Should still have friendship's sweet assistance  
 From songful spirits at a distance.  
 For here is human friendship only,  
 And Mrs. Dove and I are lonely ;  
 And tho', on seasons out of number,  
 We're kissed by human lips to slumber ;  
 And tho' we feel caresses loving  
 Drawn round our eyelids, without moving—

And nestle upon hands, confiding,  
As if in forest-shadows hiding ;  
And even condescend to show us  
Obedient when some tongues speak to us ;  
Yet, after all, this human love,  
Dear Sir, what is it to a Dove ?  
It is not quite as cruel, truly,  
As I did think, (I own, unduly,)  
When first the dreadful reasoning creature  
Surprised me in the hush of nature ;  
But still 'tis poor and sad, half folly,  
Half wildness, and whole melancholy ;  
And if we were not near each other,  
We should have only you, my brother,  
To keep our spirits from dejection,  
While darkened so with man's affection.

And now dear brother-friend, Canary,  
It seemeth to me necessary  
To write a portrait of the being  
You deign to value without seeing ;  
That, having read it, inartistic  
As it may be, and egoistic,  
You may attain a clearer notion  
Of one who loves you to devotion.

My feathers,—do not think me proud,—  
Are colored faintly as a cloud,  
A fair brown cloud at dawn of day,  
Which bears, within a golden ray,  
A secret kept, which all the way  
Shines out for joy. My feet are red,  
Contrastingly, as used to tread  
Bright sunset clouds, and thence retaining  
The colour of their crimson staining ;  
My golden eyes may each have drawn  
A spark of light from highest dawn,  
Which glows and opens, as you view them,  
Till sunset reds are likest to them ;  
Nor marvel that I so have won mine  
Image out of clouds and sunshine,  
When ancestors of mine, above them,  
So often flew as Venus drove them,

And on my neck I still am wearing  
The yoke-mark, which their part was, bearing  
A fair light mark, my neck enringing,  
A rainbow out of darkness springing ;  
I would not change it for your singing ;  
Tho' certainly Anacreon's story  
Detracts a little from the glory,  
Saying she sold him 'for a song' our  
Grandsire, most insulting wronger ;  
But some, in dear esteem who hold us,  
Declare she never would have sold us,—  
Not for an epic, whose aroma  
Was all of amarynths and Homer.

Enough ! No peacock's tail, a glowing  
Upon earth's darkest dust bestowing,  
Is swept by me (*my* tail partaketh  
The universal shade she maketh !) ;  
And yet with such a graceful motion  
I rise and stoop like waves on ocean,  
I hear applied what one expresses  
About 'majestic lownesses.'

A sudden fear, reflection raises,—  
' What will he think of these self-praises ? '  
But, dear kind friend, we birds inherit  
No mounting and immortal spirit ;  
Our souls are our fair forms, and we do  
More glory in them than men need do.  
Yet beauty is not all, nor doubt me  
(In naming other things about me),  
I am too modest e'er to quarrel  
With such as you for music's laurel,—  
I mean for science ! All my chanting  
Was learnt from winds and waves descanting ;  
A solemn sweetness is its feature,  
A sad slow monotone of nature,—  
The fall of dew and leaf resembling  
So much, it sets my bosom trembling  
With a soft memory-passion, mourning  
For things to which is no returning.  
Alas ! alas ! what am I doing ?  
I break into a sudden cooing—

Forgive me ! tho' myself affected,  
I would not make my friend dejected.  
And seriously considered, cages,  
Tho' portions of the iron ages,  
Are not, for all their wires, to shut us  
From many true delights that suit us.  
For all their iron wires, they loose us  
To our 'adversity's sweet uses' ;  
And I myself am quite aware of  
A deepened inward sense, a care of  
More intellectual things, than found me  
With only woods and skies around me.  
For instance, what imagination  
Of bird, at large in the creation,  
Tho' wont in flights sublime to risk it,  
E'er reached a vision of white biscuit ?

To balance this, I own at present  
Some circumstances are unpleasant,  
And the associates I am able  
To mix with, are exceptionable ;  
There is a little dog whose name is  
Myrtle ! Oh, that aught so famous  
To doves and Venus as that tree is  
Should lend its name to such as he is !  
But so it is, and, speaking justly,  
This Myrtle's neither fierce nor crusty,  
A poor dull worthy dog, reposing  
All day beside the fire, with nose in  
The rug, and eyes half shut, which show them  
Properly meek, whene'er we do them  
The honor of approaching to them.  
Yet this same Myrtle (will you credit  
The monstrous statement when you've read it ?)  
With insolent affrontery, hath in  
The water placed for us to bathe in  
Immersed his nose, and fall'n to drinking,  
As if a common fountain-brink on ;  
And this offence has been repeated  
Twice, thrice or four times, and we meet it  
With proper indignation, springing  
Towards him with a martial singing

In our wings, and fiercely wave them  
About his head, who dares not brave them,  
But walks away, retiring slowly,  
To show he is not servile wholly !  
A worthy dog, in his totality,—  
Tho' wanting tact and ideality.

Then there's a parrot with its staring  
Black eyes, and insolence past bearing ,  
Our own compatriot, (Cain was Abel's,  
As heard our grand-dame 'mong the cables  
Of Noah's ark,) and green, most vernally  
As if our tropic woods eternally  
Had stained his wings, without bestowing  
The calmness *their* deep heart is knowing ;  
For *she* is full of stir and meanness,  
More anxious after *blue* than greenness ;  
Her native screechings trans-atlantic,  
Commingling with a slang pedantic  
Of ' what's a clock ? ' (Degenerate folly,  
A bird take note of time !!) or ' Polly  
Put on the kettle ' or ' Water Cresses ' !!  
I name with horror these excesses,  
And feel, from inward indignation,  
I would not stoop t' articulation  
Not even of Greek,—tho' tempted sorest,—  
Not for a green nest in a forest !  
This parrot habits, as is proper,  
A lower room, and we, an upper,  
And neither of us often views her  
Except when people introduce her,  
And then, dear friend, you'd really wonder  
To see how she would keep us under,—  
As if, besides her linguist powers, her  
Tail was twice as long as ours are !  
Devouring all our seed, or wasting—  
Objecting even to our tasting.  
Of course we would resist but (praise me !)  
High-tree-born birds have delicacy—  
And then—and then—if I must speak, Sir,  
She has, besides her eyes, a beak, Sir !

My own compatriot, with such candour  
Being portrayed, acquit of slander  
My true opinion of another,  
Whose honor 'twas, to call you brother ;  
Canary was he, even as you are,  
Tho' his accomplishments were fewer.  
A pretty, sprightly bird, that never  
Reflected, hopping on for ever  
With more of volatile giration  
Than could deserve my admiration.  
My spouse, myself, and Myrtle, eyeing  
By turns, and sometimes even prying  
Into my nest,—which was most trying,—  
*Was ! is* not. He is gone ! one morning,  
He flew whence there is no returning  
Beyond the opened panes,—to hie him  
Where human kind could not come nigh him.  
Well ! peace be his ! may he have rested,  
Where every bird is music-breasted,  
Where shines the sun on Ax or Yarrow,  
United to some gentle sparrow.

And now, dear friend, I must pursue mine  
Account, by noticing the human.  
May you, the generous fates have brought, where  
Are none who don long coats and short hair,  
But if, of those dread beings, any  
Are near you, near to me are many ;  
And we may speak of griefs resembling,  
In friendship's sympathetic trembling.  
Alas ! dear friend ! what awful noises  
They make with footsteps and with voices !  
With what a clashing laugh they tease us !  
How roughly by our tails they seize us !  
And, in our sweetest chantings, cry out  
(Have they *no* ear for music ?) ‘ Quiet !! ’  
There’s one,—I think they call him William,—  
A hawk’s or vulture’s soul must fill him !  
For every day he’s sternly able  
To lay a red cloth on the table

## AN EPISTLE TO A CANARY.

And then a white one, like the lightening  
 Flashing wide ! It is *too* frightening !  
 Our very senses seem retreating,  
 And really,—we can't go on eating.

You'll wish that he would come this minute,  
 To end a scrawl with so much in it,  
 And so, farewell ! You will not wonder  
 That metre-rules I've written under ;  
 Creation's self's a poem, written  
 In lovelier rhymes than I have hit on ;  
 And I was taught by winds pathetic,  
 Thro' shaken woods, to be poetic.  
 Besides I sit,—perhaps you know it ?—  
 Close to a human feeble poet ;  
 And tho' her verse is very wanting  
 In all that beautifies my chanting  
 Yet still she learns in nature's college,  
 And has a little sound dove-knowledge ;  
 And I confess,—now don't discover  
 I condescend too much,—I love her !  
 At least you'll pardon me, Canary !  
 You love a human thing called Mary !

Farewell ! we are not of one feather,  
 Yet surely would agree together,  
 And, tho' apart, believe the love  
 You're held in by

your faithful

DOVE.

P.S.

I'm very glad you've heard of Bella.  
 You'd hear but good, were *I* the teller !  
 Had I an eagle's sky-dominion,  
 I still would let her stroke my pinion.

ELIZABETH BARRETT BARRETT.

[*The manuscript of 'An Epistle to a Canary' is now in the collection of Mr. Edmund Gosse.*]

### *ALFRED LYTTELTON.*

WHEN his friends heard of the death of Alfred Lyttelton on July 5, 1913, their sun seemed to vanish and their landscape to be darkened. He was, indeed, a human sun radiating warmth and light around him. Immediately after this loss it was not possible, for me at least, to write about him, but at this distance of time it is less hard to say that which ought to be said. I can claim a right to do this, because I was one of his oldest and most continuous comrades. I first saw this dearest of friends, a boy of not quite yet thirteen, overflowing with vitality, in my tutor's old pupil-room in Vidal's Yard at Eton, one day at the end of January 1870, and I last saw him, a man of fifty-six, with life's history written on his face, on June 24, 1913. He was listening to music, at an evening party at Kent House, whither he had come, in Privy Councillor's uniform, after dining at the Palace with the King to meet the President of the French Republic. Unconsciously I had spoken with him for the last time. Thirteen evenings later—it seemed incredible—his body was lying in a Worcestershire churchyard, close to the home of his fathers and of his own boyhood.

Alfred Lyttelton and I were in the Eton house known as 'Evans,' that of the last of the real, or literal, Eton 'dames,' Miss Jane Evans, a lady of heroic nature and great governing capacity. She inspired her boys by her masculine, and yet womanly, house-patriotism, even as Queen Elizabeth inspired her buccaneers. Some one once ventured to say to Miss Evans, 'I suppose the Lytteltons were the best house captains you ever had ?' 'Not at all,' replied she, indignant that her house should be thought to rest on one family, 'I have had plenty of others quite as good as the Lytteltons.' It was said that Queen Victoria, at Windsor Castle, had great admiration for this Eton neighbour and lesser contemporary ruler. Alfred Lyttelton sometimes thought of writing a memoir or study of Jane Evans, and that he did not do so is one of the losses of literature, for his style in writing was racy and original, and the collective Lyttelton reminiscences of Miss Evans and her father were extensive. We also had the same tutor, William Johnson, until that man of singular and poetic genius left Eton. In pupil-room, he used to address Edward and Alfred Lyttelton collectively as 'Boblets'; with reference to their then 'major' Robert Lyttelton. I did not, however, know

Alfred well until our last two years at school, 1874 and 1875, when we were brought more together by, for one thing, the common study of history, as an 'extra,' in the class taught by Oscar Browning. In those years Alfred was the chief hero, not only of his house, but of Eton, and, as Lord Curzon of Kedleston said in his letter to *The Times*, never was there such a school hero. I myself was of rather retired and reserved character, and the kindness of the heroic Alfred first inspired the strong devotion which throughout life I felt, and feel now, for him. 'Evans,' under the leadership of a series of Lyttelton brothers, ending with Edward and Alfred, successive captains of both the Eton cricket and football fields, had risen to hegemony among all the Houses, those component states of the free and self-governing federal nation called Eton, where so many English statesmen have learnt their first lessons in practical politics and administration, and have acquired the arts of discipline, comradeship, obedience, and leadership. In Alfred's last year the House was supreme on land and river. The dinner-table in our baronial hall glittered with captured trophies. We held, together, a rare achievement, the three great cups—those of football, cricket, and rowing, besides most of the lesser symbols. The House was overflowing with boisterously vigorous young life, and by no means lacked a share in intellectual interests. To ease our contentious minds we started the first house debating society at Eton. Charles Lacaita was Newcastle Medallist (two years earlier), and Alfred himself won, in 1875, the School History Prize. Alfred, in that year, said to me that the House was like Athens, as described by Pericles, according to Thucydides, in the 'funeral oration'—'Our city is equally beautiful in peace and in war. For . . . we philosophise without softness.'<sup>1</sup> These achievements were due mainly to the Lytteltons, and most of all, perhaps, to Alfred, ideal captain and leader, to deserve whose praise the boys who followed him on the football field would have staked their lives had the mimic warfare been real. Alfred was not an oarsman, or of value in pure athletics, such as racing or jumping, but in all other of our great and serious pursuits he was first. When he left Eton he said to Dr. Warre, who was then, as assistant master, the inspiring soul of the Eton volunteers, that the one thing which he regretted in his Eton life was that he had not enlisted in this force, a regret very pleasing to that gallant and strenuous commanding officer.

<sup>1</sup> Or as Jowett freely translates it—'We cultivate the mind without lack of manliness.'

Those who proceed from Eton to Trinity College, Cambridge, or perhaps to some other colleges in the old universities, pass at a step from a more primitive to a later civilisation, where athletic prowess is at a lower, and intellectual qualities at a higher, valuation. Most school heroes lose by the transition, much as an eminent warrior in the Wars of the Roses would have lost, had he been suddenly transferred to the polite society of the reign of Anne. But Alfred Lyttelton was many-sided, and belonged to a family which had combined in a rare degree intellectual with athletic pursuits. At Cambridge he laid the foundation of long supremacy in the tennis court; and, in succession to his brother Edward, he was captain of that greatest of all Cambridge elevens whose successes culminated in their world-renowned victory at Portsmouth over the most formidable team ever sent by Australia to England. A memory-haunted lover of cricket might now adapt to southern purposes the last line of Francis Thompson's lamenting lay of the Lancastrian Red Rose, and say :

'For the field is full of shades as I near the shadowy coast,  
And a ghostly batsman plays to the bowling of a ghost,  
And I look through my tears on a soundless-clapping host,  
As the run-stealers flicker to and fro,  
To and fro ;—  
O my Edward and my Alfred long ago !'

Where, indeed, is all that cheerful, many-hued and many-toned multitude of young and old, which did actually encircle Lord's ground on University Match Day of 1878, the year of his captaincy, at the moment when Alfred Lyttelton, in full splendour of superb youth, strode from pavilion to wicket to bat in his glorious style for old Cambridge? Alas! How many who then were there have now vanished across the line, or have faded into dim phantoms of their past selves!

But by no means a cricketer only, Alfred was among the first in the social and intellectual life of Cambridge, which then ran gay and full, and wherever his sunlit presence came conversation took a brighter, higher, and more vigorous tone. He and I followed the same school, that of history, sitting together at the feet of that remarkable teacher, Sir John Seeley, who did so much to inspire the rising youth of Cambridge with the imperial destiny of England. Usually Alfred came to my rooms in the old clock-tower to do some reading in the evening. At a later hour other friends would drop

in, and the Great Court of Trinity, through which flows the ceaseless river of youth, has not known talk more cheerful and easy. We were both members of the select and ancient Cambridge Society known as 'the Apostles,' who hold secret debates on Saturday nights upon all things human and divine. Men of the quality of Frank and Gerald Balfour, James Ward, S. H. Butcher, A. W. Verrall, Welldon, Stephen Spring-Rice, then illuminated our discussions. Like in this to some other distinguished Cambridge parliamentarians, such as Hartington, Henry Campbell-Bannerman, Arthur Balfour, and Gerald Balfour, Alfred Lyttelton never spoke at the Union Debating Society. He belonged to the 'A.D.C.', and acted in their theatre, but had not the real actor's temperament, like his contemporaries in that society, Charles Brookfield, the most amusing humourist in our Cambridge circle, and the present Speaker of the House of Commons. Alfred could only represent himself.

After these delightful days, when together, as Tennyson says, we 'plucked the blossom of the flying terms,' we became law students in London at the Inns of Court. After three or four years I followed other lines, and, for a time, saw less of Alfred, although never losing touch with him.

The youngest of eight brothers and four sisters, all of vigorous and distinguished character, and belonging to one of the best-known and most widely connected families in England, and himself full of life and charm, Alfred Lyttelton at Eton, at Cambridge, in London, and in the great houses of England and Scotland, had immediate entrance into what is, of its kind, the best society. In London it is that society which is probably the best in the existing world, and combines the most powerful and experienced men of various action, the most charming women, and some of the more urbane and amiable men of intellectual and artistic distinction. No one, more than he, or perhaps so much, in our time, drank the fine wine of English social life. If he was unspoiled by this absence of difficulty it was due to the bountiful goodness, and real modesty, and sound judgment in all things with which he was endowed. In later life we were more than once associated in work, as we had been at Eton and Cambridge. Alfred Lyttelton was appointed in 1900 to be Chairman of a small Commission which Mr. Chamberlain sent to South Africa to investigate the monopolies, or dubious concessions, which the Government of the Transvaal Republic, not always for the best reasons, had granted to divers Englishmen, Scotsmen, Americans, Germans, and Jews, and I

accompanied him as Secretary to the Commission. We spent several weeks at Capetown, seeing a good deal of Sir Alfred Milner, at Government House, and were afterwards some weeks at Pretoria, where, one hot October morning, from the balcony of the Government Buildings, we saw the rite of annexation performed in the great square, with military pomp, by Field-Marshal Lord Roberts. The war around was, however, still in lively progress, so that our Inquiry was attended by some difficulties. We returned through Natal, and visited Ladysmith, and Waggon Hill, and the recent positions on the Tugela river, where the trenches, so stubbornly held by the Boers, still were sprinkled with cartridges and food-tins, and one could pick up fragments of British shell. In 1901-2 Alfred Lyttelton was a member of the Royal Commission on the Port of London, to which I was secretary, and, when he was made Secretary of State for the Colonies in September 1903, he asked me to act as official private secretary. This brought me into most intimate connection with him and his action during the two difficult years of Mr. Balfour's Government, closing at the end of November 1905.

Family tradition moulded Alfred Lyttelton's political thought on Whig lines, modified by the enchanting spell of his uncle-by-marriage, Mr. Gladstone, at whose feet he was brought up. He broke loose from this magical influence in the early spring of 1886, at the age of thirty, when, after some hesitation and indecision, he was forced, on a visit to Hawarden, to tell the formidable and impressive, and by him much revered, old man that he could not follow his new Irish policy. 'And your reasons, if you please?' said Mr. Gladstone in his very deepest tone. Alfred used to say that this interview was one of the severest ordeals in the whole of his political experience. In later times, Alfred Lyttelton was inclined, rather, to sympathise with those who think that a solution of the Irish difficulty may be found in some kind of prudent and cautious federalisation of the United Kingdom upon the Canadian model. He entered the House of Commons as a Liberal Unionist, following the Duke of Devonshire and Mr. Chamberlain. His temperament was that of an aristocratic Liberal, that of the Greys and Lansdownes, Spencers and Cavendishes. He was guided, or believed that he was guided, by reason, was open to new ideas, and was never, like a Tory or Radical, under the spell of either insuperable innate conviction, or of passion. '*On chasse de race*,' and a Lyttelton could hardly be otherwise. He was, to the end, closely bound to Mr. Balfour

by the strongest feelings of friendship and loyalty. To one of Alfred's training and temperament the choice suddenly offered in 1903 between adhesion to the policy of the preceding sixty years, and a return, on a new plane, towards the older British commercial and fiscal principles, was hard to make. I met him on the Embankment at a critical moment. He had made up his mind to adhere to Mr. Balfour, but he said, 'I have not power of decision left in me enough to choose a neck-tie.' The choice made, he adhered to it without wavering. In September 1903 he became Colonial Secretary in trying circumstances. Never before had he held any administrative post, and he succeeded in the Colonial Office to a man of Mr. Chamberlain's capacity, energy, and renown. The popular tide, high in 1900, was rapidly ebbing from the Government, and their adversaries in Parliament, reviving from a long depression, and stimulated by successive by-elections and the division in the Unionist camp, became every day more exultant and, one might almost say, insolently aggressive. Events in South Africa made the Colonial Office a storm-centre. Lord Milner was pressing on the reconstruction of the Transvaal and Orange River Colonies, after the destruction caused by the War, and the labour force was inadequate to the need. Hence the proposal to introduce indentured Chinese labour, subject to conditions of compulsory repatriation. Lord Milner very swiftly and easily carried this scheme in principle at a Cabinet meeting which he was invited to attend when in London in the autumn of 1903. Whatever the merits of this device for meeting an exceptional time of stress, the Cabinet certainly did not in the least foresee the strength of the racial passion which their decision would arouse, both at home and in the Australasian Colonies. The arrangements for the Chinese recruiting and importation themselves caused infinite labour; they were carried through in face of a hurricane in the country and in Parliament, and work at the Colonial Office, then also the final authority for all the other countless unsettled South African questions, was terrific. The lower kind of political partisans took full advantage of the occasion, and caricatured the position of the Chinese in colours which the succeeding Colonial Secretary, Lord Elgin, a man of veracity and honour, publicly repudiated and condemned. Alfred Lyttelton faced this clamour and the continued attacks in Parliament with serene courage, and with the nerve of a good batsman against hard bowling. He opposed truth to misrepresentation, and common-sense to sentimentality. In

1904-5 a good deal of toil was certainly thrown away over the construction of the semi-self-governing Transvaal constitution, which, in consequence of the Government's fall at the end of 1905, never came into actual operation. When this constitution was first mooted I suggested to Alfred Lyttelton (I must ask the reader's pardon for quoting myself for the purpose of this anecdote) that as, according to all the omens, the Liberals would almost certainly soon come into power and alter it, and as, on our own showing, it was not, in any case, to last more than a very few years, it might be wisest to take the bold course and grant full self-government to the Transvaal at once. Then the Liberals could not magniloquently take the credit of that which inevitably must soon come to pass. He made some of his long steps across the room, and then, throwing back his head in the Lyttelton way, said, 'By Jove, B. H., it would be splendid if we could do that, but—it can't be done. We are too much committed to development by stages.'

This special pressure of South African affairs, added to the innumerable questions which at all times pour into the Colonial Office from every quarter of the globe, ranging from tribal affairs in darkest Africa to relations with Canada and Australia, together with all the other functions which have to be discharged, and speeches which have to be delivered, by a Secretary of State, made these two years a time of high and incessant activity. Alfred Lyttelton fought in the good cause, and under the Chief whom he loved, and his strong patriotism found satisfaction in an intensely interesting office where so much can be done, often in ways quiet and unobserved, to promote the strength and welfare of the British Empire. 'One crowded hour of glorious strife is worth an age without a name!' It was well worth while to sacrifice for those two years a lucrative career at the Bar, leading to a seat on the Judicial Bench. The relations of members of this Cabinet to each other were remarkably close and candid. It was, in fact, very much like an Eton Eleven. Its members were mostly on terms of Christian names. An assistant private secretary, who had served under both Chiefs at the Colonial Office, noticed that whereas no correspondent had ventured to address the late Minister as anything but 'Mr. Chamberlain,'—save equal colleagues, who dropped the 'Mr.'—most of Lyttelton's acquaintances wrote nothing but 'Alfred.'

One action, it may fairly be said, has given to the name of Lyttelton a lasting place in the history of the Empire. In April

1905 he addressed a circular dispatch to the Governments of the self-governing Dominions suggesting, for consideration at the next quadrennial Conference, a scheme for the development of the Conference into a true Imperial Council, with a standing Committee and distinct official staff to follow up or prepare questions between the meetings of the Council. The scheme was fully accepted by the Governments of Australia, New Zealand, and the still existing Cape Colony, but its evolution was checked, after long debate, at the 1907 Conference, by the cautious and conservative Liberal Prime Ministers of the United Kingdom and Canada. Yet the movement given has led to many imperial developments already, and will, if Heaven permits, lead to more hereafter.<sup>1</sup>

As Secretary of State for the Colonies, Alfred Lyttelton, in his too brief term, won the esteem and affection of all who served under him, both in the office itself and beyond the Oceans in various quarters of the world. As at Eton and Cambridge, he was the best of captains by reason of his full and generous appreciation of all good work done. He never wished to take any credit to himself which he could possibly give to another, and he was lenient to everything save want of zeal. He said to me once that when he was a cricket captain he never blamed a man for his misfortune in missing a catch, if he had run as fast as he could to meet it, but condoled with him, and that the same principle applied to other things. His gifts of character, mind, and appearance would have made him a perfect Governor in a great Dominion, and I think that he looked to this as one possible sphere of action if his party returned to power. He would also have been an excellent Viceroy in India ; and certainly a *persona grata* to the princes and aristocracy of that Empire, who can well appreciate a man and a great gentleman. House of Commons critics thought him, I believe, to be deficient in the quickness of decision and reply necessary for a leader in debate, but in more important respects he would have been an admirable leader of the Unionist Party. He was generous, appreciative, and many-sided, and had, therefore, the power beyond most men of uniting and holding together men of different characters. He was a man whom one naturally desired to consult, in any difficulty. It is not, perhaps, too much to say that it was largely due to him that during the years 1903-5 no wider breach took place between the very cautious Mr. Balfour and the rather impetuous

<sup>1</sup> Mr. Richard Jebb has well brought out the place in history of this dispatch in his excellent work, *The Imperial Conference*, vol. ii. p. 11, &c.

Mr. Chamberlain. Alfred was a mediator by nature, because he loved unity and hated discord. Mr. Chamberlain liked him, and once said that, when he felt depressed during one of his own speeches, he turned to look at Alfred Lyttelton, and at once felt cheered and supported. If a man so much superior in age and renown felt this, how much moral support younger men would have derived. Leaders do not always remember how much they can do for their party, and even for themselves, merely by listening with evident attention to what their humbler followers have to say. If Alfred Lyttelton was not rapid in retort, or in that questionable parliamentary art which consists in the rapid invention of tactical phrases and devices, it was partly because he had a fair and not partisan mind, more fitted, perhaps, to high administrative posts than to the warfare of a democratic assembly. Lord Clarendon, in his 'History of the Rebellion,' speaking of the difficulty which good men had in meeting the tactics of Pym and his crew, says that there are certain very effective weapons of popular agitation and acquisition of power (he recites them, and they are by no means obsolete now) which 'a gallant man would hardly give himself leave to use for the preservation of the three kingdoms.' Alfred Lyttelton was a 'gallant man' in this sense. He liked to deal with a question upon its merits. He wished to reform things, not to assail persons. His temperament might, after a certain age, have been more suited to the atmosphere of the House of Lords, and he would, I think, have liked to finish his career in the serener and finer air of our British Senate.

What a man does in life is, after all, merely his reflection in the mirror, revealing his character. If he acts on the raised stage of the world's political affairs, this is only something because it affords a more far-seen example, or warning. Alfred Lyttelton's public career was unfinished; the sense of loss was increased by the feeling that there was much more good work that he would have done; in the midst of his days he came suddenly to the shore of the dark stream which all must cross; but his character had been completed, and in that sense his fate was fulfilled. Few men, merely by being, apart from action, have done so much good in the world. I remember no time, from schooldays downwards, when Alfred Lyttelton's presence did not vitalise the spirits and raise the tone of all around him. A friend of mine says that it did one good 'even to meet Alfred in the street.' Victor Hugo somewhere describes a party of middle-aged people sitting depressoedly together and talking heavily and slowly on dull subjects. Suddenly they

all change and brighten, become animated, cheerful, smiling. Why? ‘It is that a child has come into the room.’ Alfred’s entrance would produce that effect. His mind was early that of a man, yet he never ceased to have his first candour, sincerity, and freshness. The Lytteltons, having lost their mother early, and being the children of a studious and pre-occupied father, were brought up in their large old Worcestershire Hall in rather a self-educating way, and their untaught manners were not always more perfect than those of Peter or Philip in the great German classic of our nurseries. The late Lady Louisa Egerton told me that, as a friend of the family, she once felt it her duty to reprimand the small Alfred upon a point of these minor morals. He looked up at her in surprise at this new aspect of things, with such entirely ‘frank and honest eyes’ that she had not the heart to go on with her reproof. He was always like that. Before those strong, frank, and honest eyes no misunderstanding could live, any more than a meanness or duplicity. Men and women who came into touch with him felt something nobler, larger, richer, more magnanimous, generous, and loving than themselves. He had immense *bonté*, as the French call it, a word embracing, but exceeding by the idea of active warmth, the English word ‘goodness.’ It is influence of this kind that raises the level of humanity, and has made the higher religions. The touch with superior love and virtue scatters the proud in the imagination of their hearts, raises the humble, and fills the hungry with good things.

The late Sir Richmond Ritchie, also a Cambridge friend, with humorous exaggeration, used to say that when an upper-class Englishman had gone through his private and public school education, he did not even begin to grow human again until he was forty. Alfred Lyttelton was one instance to the contrary. He never at school fell a victim to ‘common form’; he resisted and helped others to resist the might of that moulding machine, and throughout life he kept the free spirit and natural manner of his glorious youth. His mind had the same easy swing as his body. Never did he acquire the rather deadly art by which the average Englishman suppresses all outer manifestations of his emotions and affections, too often killing the emotions and affections themselves for want of external exercise. In Alfred’s manner there was every outward visible sign of the inward spiritual affection; it was his inclination to throw his arm round a friend; and he had the rare art of showing affection without lack of manliness. I do not speak of him here in his fine relations as husband and father and brother. His love of

mankind was really great ; he had suffered certain most piercing sorrows himself—with all his other good fortune ; he had learned the divine art of pity, and he felt affection for most people of whose moral conduct and character he did not disapprove. If he did disapprove, that also he could express, and powerfully. He had a look and tone of voice of this kind, which touched meanness or cowardice or ingratitude or disloyalty like the spear of Ithuriel. It was part of his great humanity that he thirsted for affection as well as gave it. His presence refreshed the old, invigorated his equals, and inspired the young. Yet he was endowed less richly than some men with an unfailing flow of natural high spirits and cheerfulness. He was sensitive, nervously made, and an underlying melancholy was visible from early days in the deep-set eyes, and sat on the striking brow. A student of the history of his family might find some inherited tendency of this kind, or it may have been connected, in his own case, with physical causes presaging too short a life. One saw this look when he was in repose, unconscious of observation, and it came out in photographs and pictures. In a photograph of the light-hearted Eton Debating Society, made when he was seventeen, his look is more grave and sad than that of all the rest. But in the company of others this expression instantly vanished. His was one of those faces which suddenly and beautifully light up. This tendency was held at bay not only by Alfred's zest in life, but also by his will, carrying out his avowed principle that a man should not allow himself to communicate to others his own depression of spirit. *Noli contristari.* He was impatient in trifles, and sensitive to noise and other such discomforts, and, for instance, not very well made to be a traveller. He did not belong to the class of men who can without discomposure or restlessness miss a train and wait for two hours at a stagnant country junction. He was very incapable of even brief inaction. It was not in his character to sit long brooding by a fire or in a garden, nor, like Wordsworth, on an 'old grey stone' by the side of a lake, however beautiful. That poet said that he did not like to talk with local acquaintance or neighbours :

‘ Better than such discourse doth silence long,  
Long barren silence square with my desire ;  
To sit without emotion, hope, or aim,  
In the loved presence of my cottage fire,  
And listen to the flapping of the flame,  
Or kettle whispering its faint under-song.’

This inactive and unsocial mode of passing the hours would

never have suited Alfred Lyttelton. It was partly, perhaps, an underlying and menacing melancholy that drove him, as indeed in varying degrees it drives most men, into vigorous action. Some men, at least, are urged into constant activities by an undefined terror within them. But Alfred Lyttelton found consolation and support in a strong sense of religious duty. The moderate and well-tempered form of worship supplied by the Church of England, with a kind of cheerful self-restraint in it, suited well his needs, and he had, I think, the solid racial and patriotic attachment to the National Church which is the most often found in members of long-established families deep-rooted in England's soil; which was, for instance, found unbreakably strong in Pusey, a man of old rural Wiltshire gentry stock, but not in Newman or Manning. Alfred Lyttelton was English of purest breed. No other country could have produced him, not even Scotland, nor could he have come of any other class. This is not surprising, for the Lytteltons had been of the Worcestershire gentry from the time of Henry III at least, and had constantly intermarried with their like. He was English of the very best type, and the world has nothing better than that. Mr. Asquith well said, in the simple diction which best robes a complete truth, that Alfred Lyttelton was what every English father would like his son to be. The Church of England floats partly, they say, on reason, but a good deal more on music, which, indeed, for all we know, may be the highest reason, the serious but cheerful music of matins and evensong in cathedrals and college chapels, such sweet harmonies as, at Cambridge, beneath those 'storied windows richly dight,' dissolved into ecstasies the young and dreaming Milton, and brought all Heaven before his eyes. Alfred also, in his day, loved that same 'service high and anthems clear,' when the old chants mingled inexpressibly with the dewy freshness of his morning of life at Eton, and, where I often saw him on dim-lit winter afternoons, in that most romantic of chapels, alive with chivalric history, St. George's at Windsor, and then at Trinity, or beneath the wondrous vault of 'King's.' In London days he much frequented St. Paul's Cathedral, that solemn home of sacred song. Always he found delight and consolation in the nobler music. It was a pleasure to watch his expressive face and gesture as he listened to Bach or Beethoven, and he understood none of the arts so well. His taste for poetry was perhaps not so deeply innate, but the two arts of sound are close allied. Long ago, at Cambridge, I gave him a poetry book in which I wrote the lines, attributed by some to Shakespeare :

'If music and sweet poetry agree,  
As needs they must, the sister and the brother,  
Then great must be the love 'twixt thee and me,  
Because thou lovest the one, and I the other.'

He liked also the stage and its inhabitants. Immediately after leaving Cambridge we lived together for about three months in Paris and constantly attended the Théâtre Français, then in great glory, with Mounet Sully in his splendid youth, the inimitable Coquelin, and Sarah Bernhardt in her thrilling prime—to see her then, and in one's own youth, and with a friend, in the last act of *Hernani*, sent one, as Alfred said, reeling home across the Place Palais-Royal—Ah ! what happy days they were, when one's years were twenty-one, and the first warm April sunshine, after a long hard winter, brought out the chestnut-buds in the gardens of Paris !

With all his delightful and refreshing conversation—never was there a better guest or host—and full as he was of life and energy and (in a sense outside the use of words) rich in self-communication, there was yet in Alfred a certain reserve. He made other people inclined to talk about themselves, but expressed seldom or little, perhaps, his own innermost thought. There was not, it may be, sufficient opportunity. The society in which Mr. Balfour, George Wyndham, and Alfred Lyttelton moved was by no means limited in its intellectual interests and politics—as little so, probably, as any political society there has been, or is, in England. Yet the high political-social world is always intent upon transient but vastly exciting incidents apt to kill other subjects of conversation, and there is too much demand that the discussion of every topic should, above all, be swift and glittering. Thoughts that lie deep seldom emerge on the surface of this eddying, shining stream. Yet what is the dominant regret when rare friends depart ? It is for occasions wasted, thoughts unworded, secrets concealed, affections insufficiently expressed. Why so much talk about politics and other ephemeral matters, so little, almost nothing, about more fundamental and deeply personal questions ? Why is so much of life spent in the torrent, where everything is, and must be, superficially dealt with ? '*Sentimus experimurque nos æternos esse*,' says Spinoza. 'We feel and are aware that we are eternal.' We inhabit time, but secretly we know that we are citizens of eternity, exiled dwellers here. Perhaps this very innate consciousness of eternal life makes reasonable men consent to all this talk and action about transiencies. Instinctively we

feel, notwithstanding the teaching of moralists, that we cannot really waste a thing so unreal as time. If we truly believed that death in ten, or fifteen, or twenty years would end all things so far as we are concerned, we surely should live more seriously and place more value upon every moment. An argument for the immortality of the soul might be drawn from the frivolity and carelessness of man. But more convincing has ever been the appearance here and there on earth of spirits so vividly living, so strong, or so radiant, that, when they disappear, it passes the power of their friends not to conceive them living still. In them eternity seems to shine through the veil of time. Intuition of eternal life, latent in our own self-consciousness, is called forth, or maintained, or renewed, by sacramental touch, through eyes or voice or gesture, with such rare souls, and so it has been from the beginning, at least, of the Christian religion. Consciousness so aroused into more vivid and higher existence takes creed-form, and weaves for itself societies bound by a common thought. It is difficult, or impossible, to imagine dispersal into empty space of a being like Alfred Lyttelton, whose very name seems to be still alive. His friends, borne down life's rolling stream, must travel onward while the distance widens between them and his visible presence, but never will they cease to know the loss till they too vanish hence.

BERNARD HOLLAND.

## FROM AN ISLINGTON WINDOW.—IV.

## I.

IT is not only from a front window that may be gathered life-stories, glimpses of Shakespearian conflict and of Pickwickian drollery, so many dissolving views none the less memorable because evanescent and impersonal. Lying outside individual experience such revelations move us as acted drama.

I have already mentioned the small drawing-room shut off from the larger by folding doors which was my study during these Islington days. It looked upon the back gardens of our own and the parallel walled-in strips of turf or flower-bed as the case might be, and open to the view, lilac and laburnum trees here and there affording shade. These mostly served the purpose of a drying-ground, every household displaying its weekly dishcloths and dusters fluttering in the wind.

Exactly on a level with my room was a similar one, steps from both leading to the garden. Below on either side lay kitchen, scullery and outhouse, in my opposite neighbour's the last-mentioned having been turned into a workshop.

That workshop and its tenant intrigued, fascinated, finally magnetised me. I found myself fancying a cramp or a fit of the fidgets, merest excuse for dropping my quill and discreetly watching the Spinoza behind the curtain. How could a gazer help thinking of Spinoza ? Alike surroundings, occupation, and craftsman forcibly recalled the great lens-polisher of Amsterdam, by far the most pathetic and striking figure in philosophic annals. This outhouse, originally intended for coke, firewood, and storage generally, made a very fair atelier as far as proportions went, and on its whitewashed walls were hung clocks, chronometers, and mathematical instruments, some of the minutest description.

Before the open door was a bench, and by it during the summer, his legs fantastically tucked under him, early and late sat the chronometer-maker—for so indeed he was.

In circumstances bringing to mind the golden-souled Jew, my *vis-à-vis* evidently belonged to British stock. The snub-nosed, wizen-faced, alert little man of thirty and odd years, although pallid, dark-haired and skinned, had not a trace of the Oriental

about him. Not altogether unprepossessing, more decided features would have greatly improved him, say as a sitter to some portrait-painter. What struck an observer was the contemplative assiduity put into his daily tasks. This humble Spinoza in one respect was wiser and nobler than he of the Ethic, who wrote: 'Excepting Man, we know no individual strong nature and in whose mind we can take pleasure, nor anything which we can unite with ourselves by intercourse.' Heaven forgive you, poor dogless, unadored philosopher!

By his side lay an equally shabby-looking and equally noteworthy dog, a black retriever past his prime and most likely some befriended stray who repaid his benefactor as only the four-footed can. It seemed a monotonous existence for a dog, but Dash seemed quite happy. So intently when awake did he follow his master's movements that one could hardly help accrediting him with a knowledge of chronometers and their fabrication. In his case, also, superior acuteness more than atoned for personal defects. To the slightest sign, much more to a word, Dash was rapturously, breathlessly responsive. Quite comprehending the obligation of silence and immobility, he would remain for hours motionless as a stuffed specimen of his kind. The pair would be visited several times a week by two sets of visitors—the first grave scientific-looking gentlemen in frock coats and top hats, the second mechanics wearing aprons and often hard at work, staying for hours, all hardly exchanging a word beyond—'Good, good.' 'Now you have it, sir.' 'All right, my man,' and so on.

And throughout the day three figures from time to time might be seen in the garden, only one of these asking so much as a glance from the manipulator or a wag of the tail from his companion. The first was a second and quite as capable Louisa—in other words, a Cockney born and bred maid-of-all-work—no less obsolete a personage nowadays than the young ladies in Miss Catherine Sinclair's novels. Mary Jane's scullery adjoined the workshop, but she had too much on her hands to notice the pair close by. Noisiest of the noisy over her pots and pails, her perpetual racket and habit of talking to herself, and even to her saucepans, never in the least annoyed the occupier of the bench. As to Dash, he understood well enough that it was quite useless to wag his tail or raise his ears till a certain hour. No bones or scraps would be about before dinner-time.

Unlike our sprightly Louisa, Mary Jane was of somewhat

repellent exterior. With Spartan endurance she toiled and moiled all day long, and hers was a very long day indeed; but she did not sing over her work or exchange quips, cranks, and wanton wiles with men folk on the area-steps. Alas! the all-compensating crowning gift of flirtatiousness did not sweeten poor Mary Jane's hard lot.

The second figure, seldom seen and heard within those scientific precincts, was that of the mistress, and fortunately for Spinoza that it was so. Continuous as the rumble of the London world outside, Mary Jane's monologuing and stir seemed normal, a matter of course. The tall, angular, but not uncomely middle-aged widow presiding over this household had a tapping heel, a strident voice, and flouncing skirts that always knocked something or other down as she walked.

But Mrs. Linney evidently knew her business and her world. The admirable woman had realised the painful truth that sometimes our room is at a higher premium than our company, however engaging. She seldom descended when her inmate was at work.

Still more rarely seen in the little oblong when the craftsman sat at his bench was the third figure—what did I say?—rather apparition—a slender, fragile-looking girl with wondrously beautiful hair and a plaintive eager face. Still in early youth, and with the sweetest dimple on either cheek, already little lines betokened care, a struggler in the workaday world.

She used to steal noiselessly, oh! so noiselessly, down the little stone stair leading from the back parlour, but never unperceived. No sooner did the slender sandalled feet touch the gravel path than Dash would prick up his ears, wag his tail, and utter a low yap, whilst his master would raise his head with a buoyant—

‘Another flower wanted, Miss Elise?’

Or—

‘At your service, young lady.’

Most often the answer was a retiring, almost timid, Yes or No, but sometimes, not very often, an appealing—

‘Mr. Lovejoy, if I might have your advice?’

Or—

‘A minute, just a minute, sir, if you can spare it.’

Thus invited he always sprang to his feet, and the pair would examine “the beds together, sparingly singling a leaf or blossom. The supply was naturally small. This especial July was, however, unusually favourable to London gardens, and in the tiny parterre

two standard roses showed fine flower-heads, respectively rich red and creamy white. Sweetwilliams also were in full bloominess, and mignonette scented the air. A few picotees, London pride, and snapdragon completed the display.

One morning as I contemplated the two figures, standing side by side, she so sylph-like, her companion inevitably recalling a satyr, Louisa burst in with some letters and with a similar comparison.

'Beauty and the Beast, miss!' she cried. 'I always think of that pantomime when I see Mr. Lovejoy and Miss Elise—'

'Why Elise?' I asked.

'You wouldn't have a genteel young lady who teaches wax-flower-making and advertises every week in the *Islington Gazette*, call herself Liza, would you, Miss? For Liza it would sure to be with Mary Jane and the pupils. Mrs. Linney's niece—an orphan—was christened Eliza you see, but she went to school in France and that's why she's called Elise—more genteel, I suppose; and it's like the milliners who always Madam-ise themselves after having crossed the water.'

'So the young lady teaches?'

'That's it, miss. Ever since the Kentish Bank in Hyde Park turned folks' heads, all the pupils in finishing schools learn to make wax roses and tulips, and even apples and pears. But of course you saw it, miss—the Kentish Bank in Hyde Park Exhibition, I mean?'

'No, indeed, I was living in the country and almost a child at the time.'

'So was I, miss, a minx just going thirteen, but my missus took me—I went to service at ten—and never shall I forget the sight. It tip-topped everything to my thinking—was the eighth wonder of the world, folks said. Just fancy, miss, a bit of green bank with grass, moss, primroses, violets, may, almost everything in the green way you can think of except spring onions, which I suppose don't grow wild, all that natural you could have plucked them but for the glass, and all made of coloured wax. So wonderful was this case that folks had to wait hours before getting a sight of it—but there's Missus a'calling; thought you'd like these letters as they come from foreign parts.'

And away darted the ever serviceable and truly styled maid-of-all-work.

Here, then, was explained those flowery consultations and the plaintiveness and lines of the delicate girlish features. Orphan-

hood, precarious means, perhaps an overweening sense of dependence, accounted for such ageing before her time.

True enough I now dimly recalled Louisa's eighth wonder of the world, having seen descriptions of it in our Suffolk schoolroom, the *Illustrated London News* occasionally finding its way thither.

Long since this tinselly mid-Victorian handicraft, with many another, has completely lost vogue. Wax flowers and fruit under glass cases no longer adorn middle-class mantelpieces, but doubtless they were useful in their day, akin to art, yet not art itself, proving a step towards aesthetic appreciation.

The two figures in the garden, then, followed callings as strikingly opposed as was each to the other in appearance—the fair, frail-looking girl absorbed in the loveliest, most ephemeral of Nature's creations; her companion with the muscular figure and dark intent features occupied with birthless, deathless Time, which is all things and yet to mortals only a name!

## II.

Mrs. Linney kept her little household alive. The adroit woman evidently understood the calls of the soul as well as those of the body. For sixty pounds a year, we afterwards learned, Mr. Lovejoy had bed and full board, his two younger fellow-lodgers paying sixteen shillings a week for bed, breakfast, supper, and Sunday meals. Well as her table was spoken of, in higher estimation still clients held her social amenities.

'We all want a daily brightener, Mr. Bevan,' she said to our city man who now 'chumm'd' with the chronometer-maker. The soul of good nature, my devoted brother-in-law at my instance had made her acquaintance. 'I never allow,' she went on, 'my inmates to grovel unrelieved along the dusty paths of pelf. When, in my dear husband's time, we tenanted a delightful little villa near Shoreditch station, and means were no object—no object whatever, Mr. Bevan—we often frequented the minor theatres such as the Eagle Tavern in the City Road. Now that I am an old woman—'

'My dear madam!' interposed her interlocutor. 'Were I a bachelor I should not venture to become your inmate; as it is—'

'Fie, fie, dear Mr. Bevan! though I don't know how it is, a bit of flattery, when well-intentioned, always cheers me up.'

'Flattery is never well-intentioned, truth always so,' rejoined the unabashed Bartholomew, as he told us, the reply being a sentimental but perfectly virtuous pressure of his hand.

'As it is, I have young men and their morals to look after, and if I do not furnish them with a little wholesome distraction at home, they will be sowing their wild oats elsewhere.'

The chronometer-maker certainly did not suggest the sowing of wild oats, nor did his fellow-boarders, shock-headed, rather scrubby, City clerks. All three, however, entered into the spirit of what Mrs. Linney grandiosely called her 'Salon,' learning part-songs under her guidance, playing bagatelle, footing it on the light fantastic toe, or allowing themselves the most comical transmogrification in such pieces as *Old Poz* or charades for family acting.

As the windows of the back drawing-room had only curtains of Mrs. Linney's own netting, and in warm weather stood wide, opposite neighbours vicariously enjoyed these festive gatherings.

Once or twice a week a bevy of youth and beauty, so the lady styled the three young ladies, joined the house party. They were well-looking girls enough and wore what in our day would be called blouses, but in their own went by the name of garibaldies, and if not dashy were generally decorative, white muslin being the favourite material.

Élise and her friends took their turn at the piano, and it was refreshing to see how thoroughly cavaliers and maidens enjoyed themselves. As to Spinoza—thus I love to call him—he went through schottische, polka, and quadrille with mathematical precision. An accomplished dancer of the old school, he never omitted a step, his exactitude having a comic air.

Whilst determined that exhilaration should be impartially apportioned, Mrs. Linney had evidently her eye upon happy possibilities. Admirably acting the ball-room steward, she managed that for appearance' sake her one eligible bachelor should dance with each fair guest at least once during the evening. But it was always Élise whom Mr. Lovejoy escorted into the garden for a breath of air or for the occasional ice, his own proud contribution to the gala.

Was the chronometer-maker regarded as a desirable nephew-in-law—or partner? Be this as it may, he was petted in every particular and duly informed that by Élise's slender fingers his buttons got sewed on and his socks darned.

One very warm evening—it was the first of July—the lawn, or rather lawnlet, presented an unusual scene. Soon after tea-time Mary Jane and Élise, Mr. Lovejoy popping out of his workshop to aid them, began to arrange chairs in a semicircle, a dozen or so, with a tall centre one in the midst, stools and hassocks suggesting youthful auditors.

I noted these proceedings none the less interestedly because I knew what was going to happen. That morning our City man, in slippers and smoking-cap, had darted out of the house just as Louisa was serving his early steak.

Ten minutes later he returned with a crestfallen air.

'No "Little Dorrit" for us to-night, worse luck,' he exclaimed. 'Had!—and, as usual and of course, by a woman. Mrs. Linney bespoke the new number last night, paying in advance. But I'm booked for the day after to-morrow.'

At the time of which I write, Dickens and his monthly parts represented literature to half his country people, its beginning, middle, and end. An enterprising stationer in the Lower, to-day Essex Road, used to supply the numbers as they came out, his charge that of a slice of pineapple—namely, a penny a day or night for the loan. As these paper-covers were not protected by a second wrapper, little wonder that a spotless 'Dickens in monthly parts' should to-day be a bibliophile's treasure-trove.

By six o'clock a clamour of voices announced arrivals, and down the stone steps trooped Mrs. Linney's household and guests: the two young ladies in white garibaldies, the hostess's nephew, Mr. Fred Linney, shopwalker of a West End house—tall, suave, and ornamental as a shopwalker is bound to be—our City man and his friend, Jim Rutter, the town traveller before mentioned and two of Élise's younger pupils, fast-growing, budding sentimentalists just in their teens. Mr. Lovejoy with much formality placed the little assemblage, reserving for himself a three-cornered stool by Élise's chair. There was a momentary pause, then, leaning on the arm of Mr. Noakes, appeared the hostess, followed by Mrs. Noakes, resplendent in her black satin and escorted by no other than our own Barthy. For coolness, commend me to your City man! Unable to restrain his impatience, the enthusiastic Dickensian at the last moment had invited himself! As to Mr. Noakes, to-night beamingly conscious of a position commanding respect, he accepted Mr. Lovejoy's attentions with almost royal condescension. Was he not only too often obliged to assume a quite opposite front, too often a most

unwelcome visitor in these precincts ? But the poor lady's arrears had dwindled, quarter-day was not imminent, he could safely indulge in an hour of Shakespeare and the musical glasses.

Amid breathless silence Mrs. Linney began—

‘ Ladies and gentlemen. To-night I shall have the pleasure of reading to you, if time and daylight permit—’

A voice—‘ What about candles ? ’ was severely frowned down.

‘ Chapters thirty-one to thirty-six, concluding the first book of “ Little Dorrit.” If you don't hear, please call out. No offence taken, I assure you all.’

Accordingly she began—

“ Anybody may pass, any day in the thronged thoroughfares of the Metropolis, some meagre, wrinkled, yellow old man (who might be supposed to have dropped from the stars, if there were any star in heaven dull enough to be suspected of casting off so feeble a spark) creeping along with a scared air as though bewildered and a little frightened by the noise and bustle. This old man is always a very little old man. If he were ever a big old man he has shrunk into a little old man. His coat is of a colour and cut that never was the mode anywhere at any period—” ”

Here the two City clerks glanced at Mr. Lovejoy, whose odd dress was a standing joke in the little community. Mrs. Linney, who often looked up between her sentences, observing the sly wink, arched her eyebrows severely, whereupon the culprits grew red and uncomfortable.

“ Clearly it was not made for him or for any individual mortal. Some wholesale contractor measured Fate for five thousand coats of such quality and Fate has lent this coat to this old man as one of a long unfinished line of many old men—” ”

Despite that rebuke, again the two shock-headed youths exchanged glances, this time unobserved. As to the object of their satire, seated at Elise's feet with Dash at his own, he was as much lost to the critics as if in the moon.

Mrs. Linney's prelection had one sovereign quality : there was not the slightest fear of any listener losing a word. Even the less acute of hearing must inevitably catch every syllable, so high her pitch, so metallic her enunciation. Expression, emphasis lacked ; rather I should say, all was emphasis, but what mattered ? Folks were there to hear, and they heard with a vengeance.

As the spell worked, the little circle one by one becoming rapt, I noticed that Mrs. Linney did not read to her friends alone.

Two or three outsiders—right and left neighbours—fortunately within earshot, now stealthily crept by their party wall, after a few minutes' attention fetching chairs and camp-stools and settling down for the evening.

Louisa also, who by no means lacked literary taste, coolly perched herself on the steps leading from my little study to the garden; thereon not only seeing the company, but hearing as well as any one of them.

Strange was it to reflect that the charm here cast had nothing whatever to do with tradition or early memories. The magician electrifying these listeners was no figure canonised by the chancery of Time. He was a living being—a mere Londoner, like themselves—who might be jostled against on the pavement any day, or who might be listened to as in dandyish velvet coat and with sparkling diamonds, he drew floods of tears over the story of Peggotty in St. James's Hall. The wonderful eyes penetrating humanity were within reach of a shilling!

The man was clean forgotten in his work to-night. Only Little Dorrit, the father of the Marshalsea, Arthur Clennam and the rest, really lived—nobody else in the wide world just then.

As the reading went on with the usual accompaniment of subdued chuckles, bursts of laughter or coughs and emungations betokening tears, Mr. Noakes presented an interesting study. In all the glory of Sunday surtout, spotless white waistcoat, and heavy gold chain, he sat quietly ecstatic as if raised to some sublunary sphere. So indeed it was with the worthy rent-collector. Once more he found himself in the genteel world, moving as to the manner born among ladies who could *parlez-vous* and play the piano, and men like Mr. Lovejoy who could talk like a book. Perhaps to his partner, also, the social atmosphere gilded refined gold and painted the lily. It was more select to hear Dickens in a drawing-room than high up in a public hall.

But on three figures my eyes rested long before quitting that back window.

Pathetic was the chronometer-maker's attitude as he sat at Élise's feet, at his own lying the faithful Dash. Adoringly as the dog eyed his master, from time to time glanced Mr. Lovejoy at the beautiful girl by his side. For beautiful she looked in the warm, subdued radiance of that summer evening, her nimbus-like hair golden as the dying beam of sunset, her slender, white-robed silhouette so strikingly contrasted to his own. Evanescence as

her white lilies in wax looked the flower-modeller : cast in bronze  
the dusky-complexioned sinewy figure at her feet ; Hamlet and  
Ophelia on a living stage !

## III.

Who could have supposed that two days later Mrs. Linney's little household would be plunged headlong into Defoe's 'History of the Plague' : not being vicariously moved, they were no mere listeners to that horrifying but most magnetic chronicle ; instead in their own persons realising its intensest page, brought face to face with dreadfulest catastrophe and portent ? True that the street was not black-draped from end to end—that no bellman's ring and watchman's loudly reiterated ' Bring out your dead, bring out your dead ! ' announced a cart-load of victims on its way to the nearest pit—that no frenzied or plague-stricken folk ran up and down wringing their hands, weeping and wailing—that no Solomon Eagle or his like almost nude and bearing a pan of burning charcoal went about shouting ' Spare us, good Lord, spare Thy people,' or ' Yet forty days and London shall be destroyed ; oh, the great, the dreadful God ! ' True that no ancient women frightened crowds with visions even more terrifying than the realities around : now a flaming sword issuing from a cloud, its point directly over the City, now a procession of coffins and hearsees slowly passing in mid-air, now a comet, faint, dull, languid, now its blazing fellow. No, none of these things made the adjoining thoroughfare awful ; the situation all the same was one to try adamantine frames and nerves of cast-iron.

The dwelling opposite my study had suddenly become a lazarus-house, its precincts deadly, its inmates so many lepers, unapproachable, not to be touched even by gloved hands. For the pestilence that had crept through Mrs. Linney's door possessed terrors outdoing those of Defoe's immortal chronicle. Then indeed all citizens who could not run away from the scourge confronted Death on the pale horse, but the few who recovered looked in the glass and found themselves unchanged, like Naaman, with skin fair as that of a little babe. Foulness had left no trace.

To-day it was otherwise. Healing might bring back the pleasant light of day, hopes, activities, affections. But the man or the woman restored to life might find themselves all but unrecognisable, marred, blurred, hideous !

What had occurred was this. On the second morning after the Dickens reading abroad, Mary Jane rushed out of the scullery door, crying :

'Mr. Lovejoy, quick, but for God's sake keep back the dog.'

The summons was answered at once. An hour later the chronometer-maker returned with knit brows and a white face. Replacing bench, stool, lenses, and implements in the workshop, he locked the door, then fastened a leader to Dash's collar.

'Barnet, Dash is off to Barnet,' he murmured during the process.

Now the leader did not trouble Dash much ; he was accustomed to it when accompanying his master to the railway station or to Greenwich Observatory by 'bus. Something, however, told the sagacious creature that all was not right that morning. Wagging his tail and uttering a caressing little whine, he pathetically testified concern.

'Dash likes Barnet. Dash will be all right at Barnet, and master will follow,' the chronometer-maker went on. Then very hastily he led his boon companion through scullery and kitchen into the street and the front door closed.

Hardly had the pair disappeared when Louisa burst in, and before uttering a word brought down the lower sash of the window with a tremendous bang. The day being heavenly but airless, I had opened it wide.

Louisa's next proceeding, and before I could remonstrate, was to lift my writing-desk, sweep everything she could lay hands on, sheets of manuscript, unopened or unanswered letters and one or two books lying on the table, into her capacious apron and make for the door.

'Come along, miss. You're not to sit here another minute. This room, the back of the house, is going to be shut up, all my cooking done in the dining-room, and you to write yonder—'

Open flew the folding doors, down were plumped desk, papers, and books, to right and left were flung the photographic albums and illustrated Christmas books adorning the centre-table of the drawing-room.

Breathlessly she got out—

'Mrs. Linney's nephew, the shopwalker in the West End house, has just been sent home wrapped in blankets, down with the—but here's Missus. She'll tell you particulars. I must be barricading below !'

Away went our incomparable Morgiana, now, as always, the unexpected calling out hidden qualities of both heart and brain.

'Is it not shameful?' said the housewife. 'A patient suffering from the most dreadful disease we know of, sent home in a common cab and without a moment's warning. Poor Mrs. Linney, and our boys, they must on no account play in the back garden.'

Here I must observe that I am writing of a time when sanatoriums were not. In that respect folks were no better off than in Defoe's days. Sanitation was not either, or certainly no West End house would have thus neglected the most ordinary precautions against contagion. In any case, the thing happened as I relate. Midway in the glorious reign of Victoria, a measure imposed by the civic authorities two centuries before had been neglected. During the Great Plague that threatened to dispeople London under the second Charles no more stringent order was published than that concerning hackney coaches which after 'the carrying of infected persons be not admitted to common use till well aired and after five or six days of unemployment.'

Well, the enemy was within neighbouring gates, and the first thing—alas! for poor human nature—was to think of ourselves. By the time our boys came from school Louisa had done her barricading to perfection. Back doors were bolted and barred, back windows hermetically closed, curtains drawn, not a breath of contaminated air could possibly be wafted that way.

Then Louisa found out which of our tradesmen served Mrs. Linney, who were forbidden approach, herself undertaking to fetch daily necessities, such as bread, potatoes, and the like. Laundress and mangle-woman she also interviewed with the same object. These particulars being arranged, we could indulge in neighbourly speculation. Was there anything we could do for the poor lady thus consternated? What would become of the little household, the shock-headed boarders, the chronometer-maker, last, but not least, *Elise*? Would not these, as did Defoe's fellow-citizens, 'take the best possible preparation for the plague by running away from it'? And mistress and maid? Would not they be abandoned in their desperate charge? Alike sock and stocking mending, novel-writing, and other avocations lost interest. Nothing could grip just then but the lazarus-house over against that pleasant little garden, now shut from gaze. What with bolted door and darkened windows, at the back our own dwelling, now reduced by half, seemed a prison!

## IV.

But *Elise* stayed on.

We could easily understand that if one most cogent reason urged her to fly, a dozen, a score, might hold her back.

A sense of duty, want of money, the difficulty of finding a refuge —who, indeed, would accept anyone fleeing from an infected house? —and, perhaps, alas! indifference explained her presence. Sad, even awful, is the reflection that a young, fair girl hardly out of her teens should be so placed as to set little store by life, should not shrink from parting with sunshine, flowers, and dear familiar things! The careworn, weary look on her face indicated something more than passiveness, a longing for repose. It might mean despair, for the gentle modeller in wax, the flower-like copyist of flowers, belonged to the nameless, the unwanted, the kithless and kinless: Mrs. Linney's auntship being mere pseudonymity.

Yet another cheerfuller and far stronger motive might possibly outweigh all others.

About noon Louisa, putting finger to lip, beckoned me into my former study and, drawing back the curtain an inch, disclosed a pretty, even an idyllic scene.

The chronometer-maker brought out of his workshop a small deal table. Forth from the back kitchen airily tripped *Elise* wearing a little white apron and bearing a table-cloth and plate-basket. Playfully, alertly, the pair laid the cloth, and a few minutes later sat down to a frugal but appetising and seasonable meal, the steaming hotchpotch being flanked with salad and a dish of ripe red apples.

The fact of dining abroad, perhaps of dining by themselves, acted like a spell. Both seemed wholly oblivious of their perilous position. At first subdued, a trifle embarrassed, and only speaking in undertones, both soon became quite at ease. An unwonted glow mantled *Elise*'s dimpled but lined cheeks. Her companion forgot to be jerky, cynical, and captious. Environment, a sudden sense of comradeship, a sentiment deeper still transformed both. Overwhelmingly, everlastinglly, they had discovered each other!

'I'll tell you how it is, miss,' said Louisa, as we drew back, 'and unless you are a bit nervous you might for all the world write here as before.' She went on to explain that at Mrs. Linney's request Mr. Yapp, the greengrocer, had called. All was going on well, he said; the young man's attack was slight, and he was nursed

in the top room overlooking the street. His aunt and Mary Jane did the nursing between them, their meals being taken apart. Mrs. Muggins, the charwoman, helped Elise in the kitchen, no direct communication taking place between the trio upstairs and the trio below.

' You see, miss,' added the girl philosophically, ' folks who have their living to get can't afford to be afraid of anything, and Mrs. Muggins says, says she, " I'd nurse folks through all the plagues of Egypt as soon as look at 'em for my grub, five bob a week, and a glass of old Tom in season." But of course, miss, the poor soul's past sixty and, like myself, has no beauty to lose.'

' You say it, not a certain young man on the area-steps,' I put in; whereupon with a ' Lawks, miss, you're always a-joking !' away she went, I following.

The little drawing-room looking on to the back gardens was not resumed, cautiousness prevailed; but from time to time I peered out, and seldom in vain.

The weather remained glorious but sultry, and the little pleasure-ground opposite served by turns as parlour, refectory, study, and atelier. Within its balmy precincts—for shumac and lavender had replaced lilac and laburnum—these two spent the summer day. Not till twilight came on did they don bonnet and hat and take a stroll outside, doubtless shunning acquaintances anxiously, as they were shunned. No one disturbed them. Mrs. Linney and the equally strident-voiced Mary Jane might occasionally call from an upper room, but they never so much as appeared at the windows overlooking the garden. No mechanicians brought bits of clockwork and worked with their employer or collaborator. No important-looking officials in surtout and top hat from Greenwich Observatory paid the chronometer-maker a visit, minutely inspecting his workmanship and discussing with him this learned subject or that. For the most part, indeed, the workshop was close shut, whilst the little flower-maker's occupation had come to a complete standstill. Both Mr. Lovejoy and Elise seemed bent on turning their quarantine into a complete, a delicious holiday.

' Prisoners of hope,' in sweet Scriptural phrase were they, but, as I have already mentioned, prisoners on parole; not only at dusk, but very early in the day, the front door would bang and the garden be deserted: the pair evidently being out of the house, seeking a breeze by the New River or by Highbury Park.

My daily peeps revealed a new Elise, not every twenty-four

hours, but every hour. I saw a change and slowly worked out the problem.

Why had she formerly showed such overweening shyness and shrinking in the other's presence; why had his sweet observances ever been so coyly, so timidly accepted? The absence of her benefactress explained everything.

When did a man, however perspicuous, see through that Chinese wall, his brother? But a certain feminine instinct, insight, psychological sense, call it what we will, is never at fault in the other sex, be the woman a mere cypher, a chittyface.

Had not this fastidious girl divined two things: firstly, that Mr. Lovejoy was to marry one or the other, aunt or her niece of the bend sinister; secondly, that first choice was Mrs. Linney's fondest dream. That dream proving illusory, her lodger was to be married willy nilly—in other words, given both a house and home.

Thus with a terrible, awe-inspiring predicament had dawned on these lovers a new delicious sense of freedom. The otherwise predestined suitor shook off his chain, he was himself, only and all himself.

What exultation and joyous looking forward were crowded into the long warm days they were enjoying, springtide, golden harvest, and aftermath of life in one—an existence not to be improved upon, a future almost nugatory, so radiant, so sufficing each moment! It was like honeymooning in a caravan. The walled-in rod or two of poor turf became enchanting as a house upon wheels—a poor thing, perchance, but it was their own!

A tremendous isolation and oneness was the portion of these lovers; cast on a desert island they could not be more lonely together. And the honeymoon was of dream wedlock, of a perfect and therefore visionary union.

Soon after six o'clock—for such days could never last long enough—both were astir.

Dainty to look at in her neat print gown and white apron, Élise would prepare the alfresco breakfast-table; Mr. Lovejoy in his shirt-sleeves lighting the kitchen fire, and whilst the kettle boiled, with mathematical precision blacking her well-worn little shoes and his own, no less the worse for wear.

The cloth laid, the bread and butter cut, and the eggs bubbling on the hob, he would betake himself to his workshop and, closing the door, souse himself vigorously as Trooper George of immortal fame. Therein, too—for the whilom scullery had been turned

into a shake-down as a precaution against the pest—he would don his light working jacket and a speckless collar, and otherwise make himself presentable, the early meal being temperately gay, quietly but joyously augural as the early twitter of birds.

Later on my Spinoza would be a Jack-of-all-trades, each task being undertaken with extreme niceness and zest. Once more turning up his sleeves and improvising an apron, he prepared the vegetables for their daily salmagundi, his potato-peeling and salad-douching being a sight to see. After all, a task depends entirely upon the spirit in which it is undertaken, certain circumstances ennobling, memorialising the humblest.

When all was ready, a sweet, no longer timid, voice would be heard at the workshop door—

‘ I have dished up, Mr. Lovejoy ! ’

Or the chronometer-maker would throw a pebble or two at the window of the back parlour and call—

‘ Miss Elise, Miss Elise, our dinner ! ’

The tenth day of this romantic existence happened to be lurid and sultry even for a London August. Whether the happy prisoners had taken an early ramble I know not.

Glancing out towards sunset I saw them unhatted, unbonneted, at supper in the garden, before each being the usual basin of bread and milk.

These emptied and put away, they talked little and in low undertones, but who could misread a new, changed attitude towards each other, the reserved yet tender familiarity of voice, look, and gesture ? Too happy they seemed, for the girl drew out her hand-kerchief and wiped away what must have been tears of joy ; he also brushed his eyes. For a minute or two they lingered on the stone steps, heart pressed to heart, lip glued to lip. Then she tore herself away and ran upstairs, he re-entered his workshop, and all was dark.

## V.

When a day or two later I took my usual peep through the venetians all was blank, silent, deserted, no tempting little breakfast with its two chairs on the turf, no subdued talk and laughter, no amateur boots in his shirt-sleeves proudly polishing a lady’s shoes, no sylph-like figure in pretty print gown flitting hither and thither. The fairy island with its Ferdinand and Miranda had vanished !

What could have happened? Were the lovers bound to some seaside resort or suburban nook, thither spirited by generous patrons—or, likelier still, forced away by physician's mandate? Mr. Lovejoy, I knew, was a *persona grata* at Greenwich Observatory, no less a personage than the Astronomer-Royal having here visited him. Might he not have been persuaded to run out of harm's reach? Élise, too? Folks who purchase wax flowers or pay for lessons in the handicraft must have money to spare. Might not a well-to-do pupil have carried her off for the holidays?

Once, twice, three times I returned to the back window, finding the same contrast, unbroken solitude and stillness, where so lately the very flowers had seemed alive, sentient of the joy around them, every moment articulate, throbbing with the happy life of two.

Not till some hours later did we learn the truth.

Human nature does not change with the ages. Just as in Defoe's prose epic, no sooner had matters taken a turn for the better than 'you might,' he wrote, 'as well have talked to the air as to the people of London enjoining precaution,' so was it when 'the plague had come up into Islington' under Victoria.

Only a day or two before our City man had come in with a budget of good news.

'As well to keep our young barbarians (he was a devotee of Byron) out of the back garden as yet,' he said, 'but everything opposite is going to the tune of Hey diddle diddle, the cat and the fiddle. I have had my usual confab on the doorstep with the engaging widow'—here to no purpose he glanced at his better half—'of course with the usual quid of wadding soaked in camphorated spirit under my tongue and a draw every other minute, a good two yards between us preventing contagion and tender interchanges'—here again he looked across the table, and again the lady was blind and deaf—'and found her in high spirits—the handsome young buck, her nephew, almost well and to be packed off to relations in the country next week, and thanks to my humble self—please Mrs. B. note this—for once in clover, in other words, has a spare tenner in her pocket.'

Here I would remark, your true City man always looks at whatever happens from one point of view. Other aspects of the unexpected will be hum'med and ha'ha'd over as occasion serves. First and foremost his thoughts revert to what he calls the *f.s.d.* question, and, when all is said and done, the question dominating human affairs, holding society together as gravity keeps in their

places the lesser and greater luminaries of the solar system. Without such upholders our world would topple head foremost to-morrow. And whether wise or simple, your City man is undeceivable, an expert, a diviner whose rod never fails him. He always finds out when folks are in want of 'tin' as he calls it, not the remotest chance of bamboozling him, and, if infallible when spotting empty pockets, in the delicate process of extracting blood from a stone he is a past master.

So after a previous talk on the doorstep, with the poor lady's gratitude and approval he had approached the shopwalker's employers, Messrs. Brown, Brown & Co. on her behalf.

'Determined of course to sit tight,' he related. 'Trust me for sitting tight when I have made up my mind to get money out of folks—the most close-fisted can't have me there.'

A handsome cheque from the West-End house was the result, and what with a new and intoxicating sense of pecuniosity and improved conditions upstairs, the poor lady completely lost her head. Contagion suddenly lost terrors, preventive measures were set aside, and catching her protectress's mood, playing with fire, Elise was now laid low.

Then what might have been foreseen took place.

The stalwart draper's assistant passed out of the lazarus-house unscathed. He had shaken off a slight attack easily, as of any ordinary epidemic. Wiriest of the wiry, soundest of the sound, strong alike of nerve, limb, and organs, Mrs. Linney, her faithful Mary Jane, and the chronometer-maker remained immune.

But as some beast of prey, shrinking from forces stronger than his own, throws himself upon a delicate victim with ghoul-like ferocity, using fangs, teeth, and claws, so did the pest serve Elise now. Day by day our City man—bearer of sympathy and of something more serviceable still to Mrs. Linney—brought us a bulletin, each dolefuller than its predecessor, words at times almost failing him, a shake of the head doing duty instead.

Swiftly and with unutterable horror came the close ; the most devoted medical skill—when did a physician fail in his duty ?—the most careful nursing, in this case not only being unable to preserve life, but its very semblance. Not angelically fair, no mere sleeping image of her living exquisite self, was the wax-flower maker when prepared for her long sleep. Rather would the scene have recalled the opening lines of 'Queen Mab' or a still more terrible sentence of the earliest, and perhaps greatest, historian.

'Fortunately poor Lovejoy, who is almost beside himself, never saw the dear girl after she took to her bed,' our City man informed us, as he spoke, sneezingly concealing a tear. 'The women—Mrs. Linney, Mary Jane, and a not bad kind of Gamp—at Elise's piteous entreaty kept him downstairs by force, indeed locked him in. But he is to follow her to the grave to-morrow. They—were—engaged—it seems.'

Thus saying without shame of face our narrator wiped his eyes and smoked away in silence.

And very early next morning, with the least possible to-do, avoided by passers-by, attended by a single mourner, the sad little procession set forth. Of stone might that figure have been, as rigid, tearless, utterly lost to outward things, he sat in the disinfected coach alone.

During the last decade of Victoria, a dapper little man would be pointed out to strangers in his shire-town as 'the gent who made the Town Clock.' Moustached, white-haired, well-dressed, advancing years and easy circumstances had much embellished Mrs. Linney's boarder. Mr. Lovejoy, indeed, was now classed among 'retired folks,' those highly respected men and women who live upon their means. He rented a neat little red-bricked house standing in its own garden. He had in his service an aged woman who wore a black silk gown at her Bethel and was duly curtsied to by her Sunday-school scholars; himself unlabelled either as church- or chapel-goer, Mr. Lovejoy regularly and undenominationally supported parochial charities and good works. From time to time he journeyed to London, rather to Greenwich Observatory and the Patent Office, and occasionally entertained horological and other bigwigs at his simple but abundant table. No longer working for bread, he indulged in the seductive but in most cases perilous gamble of patenting his own inventions. Having leisure, he spent much time out of doors and more still over—what was to him the Alpha and Omega of literature—reading and re-reading Dickens with ever-increased zest.

His little parlour possessed two fetishes, and never were Romanist's reliquary or Mohammedan's talisman held dearer, guarded with greater devotion and reverence. Over the mantelpiece hung a very poor photograph of an old retriever holding in his mouth a man's glove. And on the shelf stood a posy in wax under a velvet-rimmed glass case.

The flowers, upheld by a small hand in plaster, looked blossomy still. Here and there a petal or leaf had fallen, here and there tints had faded. But a magnificent tiger lily was perfect as when emerging from the artificer's hand, still sky blue showed the delicate nemophila, whilst a bunch of violets, if placed apart in water, might have tempted the unwary to stoop and inhale its perfume.

One conspicuous flower-head suggested Elise's story. It was a blush-rose, once the loveliest thing there, now wan, drooping, falling to pieces, hardly a semblance of its former self.

These two treasures were never touched except by their possessor, and were never mentioned.

Once over pipes and a cheering glass, an old friend, glancing at the daguerreotype, had said—

‘Good old Dash, how like him——’

‘Don't, don't——’ broke in the other, extremely agitated. The merest allusion to his pet was more than he could bear. His life indeed had no longer ebb and flow, it was a sundial that had lost its gnomon, nothing left to mark the hours.

So much for our City man's report. I will now add a few facts gathered from local archives.

If in certain respects recalling the great glass-polisher of Amsterdam, Mr. Lovejoy could lay no claim either to Hebrew ancestry or to world-wide fame, his career was yet no ignoble one. The Midlander and apprentice of a provincial clockmaker indeed attained something like circumscribed celebrity before his death, which occurred only some twenty years ago.

His title of chronometer-maker, I afterwards learned, was no misnomer. As a rule, a chronometer, like a pin, is the work of many hands. But Mrs. Linney's dark-visaged, sinewy, cynical little boarder did really make a chronometer himself, the work of a year, this achievement and two inventions winning him honourable mention in horological annals. Not long after the tragedy just recorded, occurred the second of his life. The faithful Dash, who had been sent into the country for safety, and who had reached a good old age, only two years survived re-union with his adored master. That blow, Mrs. Linney's re-marriage, the breaking up of her little establishment, and—so rumour spread it abroad—certain huffs with astronomical authorities, decided him to quit London and retire to his native place. Excessive economy and the well-paid work of a specialist afforded him a modest *otium cum dignitate* in old age. He also enjoyed the universal respect of his fellow-

townsmen and the thought that his crowning production, the Town Clock, would keep his memory green.

And if in his case quintessential felicity had been crowded into a few short weeks, to how many of mortal born is quintessential felicity only a name ?

Mrs. Linney married—as our Louisa put it—‘a big pot in the pub line.’ More elegant was the lady’s version.

‘I assure you, dear Mr. Bevan,’ she confided to our City man, who promised to give her away, ‘I had no particular desire to re-assume the nuptial chain ; but when under such cruel circumstances a gentleman of ample means, an owner of hotel property, most obligingly stepped in, how could I say No—how could I, Mr. Bevan ?’

‘And what fellow living would have taken a No from *you* ?’ was the inevitable rejoinder.

M. BETHAM-EDWARDS.

**THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.**

BY THE RIGHT HON. SIR HERBERT MAXWELL, BART.

ON St. John the Baptist's day, June 24 next, falls the six hundredth anniversary of the battle of Bannockburn, whereof the consequences had such a lasting influence upon the destiny of the two realms, now so happily united, that it may be of some interest to recapitulate what is known of the events of that distant and momentous day. Unfortunately, so great is the discrepancy between the chronicles most nearly contemporary that careful collation of them provides material for little more than a bare outline of the engagement and knowledge of a few salient details. Criticism of the tactics on either side is well-nigh out of the question, owing to the irreconcilable nature of the statements by monkish writers, who could not be expected to understand the technical part of the business. And, with one exception, all the fourteenth-century accounts of the battle were from monkish hands. That exception is an important one—namely, the '*Scalacronica*' of Sir Thomas Gray of Heton, an English knight,<sup>1</sup> who, having been captured in a Border affray in 1355, beguiled the tedium of two years' imprisonment in Edinburgh Castle by writing, or more probably dictating, a general history of Britain, in the course of which he gives an account, tantalisingly brief, of the battle of Bannockburn. Although writing forty years after the event, Gray is exceptionally entitled to attention in this matter, not only because he was himself an experienced soldier, but because his father, also named Sir Thomas Gray, was taken prisoner on the day before the battle, which he viewed from within the Scottish lines, and doubtless communicated his impressions to his son.

On the Scottish side, our chief authority is John Barbour, Archdeacon of Aberdeen, who began his great epic '*The Brus*' sixty years after the battle, whereof he gives a long and detailed description, probably composed largely from the narratives of those who had fought in it.

A brief review of the course of events leading up to the campaign of Bannockburn may serve to refresh the reader's memory of what took place six hundred years ago.

<sup>1</sup> Ancestor of the present Earl Grey and the Right Hon. Sir Edward Grey.

Throughout the winter of 1306-7 Edward the First, greatest of Plantagenets, lay sick, his powerful frame racked with dysentery, his fiery intellect chafing at the delay of Aymer de Valence in suppressing the revolt against his authority in Scotland. This rising of 'King Hobbe,' as Edward contemptuously termed his rebel vassal Robert de Brus, Earl of Carrick, could not, he thought, be a serious affair, and the dispatches dictated from the sick-bed at Carlisle breathe considerable impatience with his lieutenant in the Northern realm, where every place of strength was garrisoned by English troops. Bruce's wife, daughter, and two sisters had been captured and lodged in English prisons; two of his brothers, Thomas and Alexander, had been brought to Carlisle and hanged. Bruce himself lay under the dread sentence of the greater excommunication, enough to deter most men from having art or part with him. Of those knights who had shown the temerity to brave it, nearly all had perished on the gallows—the Earl of Atholl, Sir Simon Fraser, the brothers Sir Alexander and Sir Christopher de Seton, and many others; while Bruce himself, having lain in hiding all winter, though he had gathered a few hundreds of broken men to his standard in spring, and scored a success against de Valence at Loudon Hill, was once more a landless fugitive in the Galloway hills. Landless, for his great estates in Annandale and Ayrshire had been forfeited; his castles of Turnberry and Lochmaben were held by English garrisons; and for a feudal noble to be landless and houseless was equivalent, thought King Edward, to being powerless. Let the Plantagenet once be in the saddle again, and he would in person put an end to this miserable guerrilla.

Warm weather in May restored him to a measure of strength. He rose from the sick-bed, attended Mass in Carlisle cathedral, where he deposited his travelling litter, and in the early days of June he rode forth on the northern road, a grim, gaunt figure. But he had not ridden far before he felt himself again in the grip of his malady, and on June 7 he breathed his last at Burgh-on-Sands, within sight of the land he had come to subdue afresh. Had he lived to conduct the campaign—well, the history of Scotland might have been cast in a different mould, so vastly was he the superior in resources to his enemy.

The reins of government passed into the irresolute and wayward hands of Edward of Carnarvon, the tool of one unworthy favourite after another. Involved in constant conflict with his own barons, perforce he suffered the Scottish war to languish. During seven

years King Robert passed steadily from strength to strength. The most patriotic Scot must feel compassion for the English commanders and their men, left unsupported in the presence of an enemy daily growing in numbers and confidence. Garrison after garrison was starved into surrender or overpowered by assault, until in the spring of 1314, of all the fortresses that King Edward had built or strengthened in Scotland, the English flag flew only over Berwick, Bothwell, Lochmaben, and Stirling. All the others had fallen and, in accordance with King Robert's uniform policy, had been razed or, at least, dismantled.

Edward Bruce, the King's brother, had laid siege to Stirling Castle in Lent 1313. The English governor, Sir Philip de Mowbray, was he who had unhorsed King Robert in the skirmish at Methven in June 1306, and well-nigh captured him. The castle was closely invested till midsummer, when Edward Bruce, having no siege engines and finding the place too strong to be carried by assault, was induced to agree to a suspension of hostilities, on receiving Mowbray's knightly pledge to surrender if he were not relieved within a year—that is, before Midsummer Day 1314.

Nothing could have been done more at variance with King Robert's consistent strategy. Ever since his encounter with de Valence at Loudon Hill he had avoided anything of the nature of a general action, trusting to the mobility of his troops to enable him to strike a blow here and there, and to obtain money and supplies by raiding over the Border, without pitting them against the superior numbers and equipment of the enemy. All this was brought to a stop by Edward's quixotic bargain. The freedom of Scotland, King Robert's own life, and the lives of his faithful captains, must now be staked on the fortune of a single field.

Nor was that all. The issue thus set conveyed a strong appeal to the chivalry of England to lay aside civil strife and concentrate all available power for the relief of their brother knight. English statesmen, also, proved eager to seize the opportunity, thrown their way by chance, for retrieving past disaster. King Edward himself was not the man to grasp it; but since his odious favourite, Piers Gaveston, had paid for his misdeeds on the scaffold at Warwick, men of action rallied to the Crown; the barons, laying aside their private quarrels, made alert response to the writs issued for a muster at Wark on June 11; and the English bishops offered forty days of indulgence to all persons who would offer prayer for the success of the expedition.

True, there were defections. Thomas of Lancaster, with his chief supporters, the Earls of Warwick, Warenne, and Arundel, put in no appearance. Still, a very powerful army was assembled. Exaggerated estimates as to its numerical strength have been handed down from one chronicler to another.<sup>1</sup> Barbour puts it at 100,000, whereof 40,000 were cavalry—obviously a preposterous figure, founded upon irresponsible hearsay, and accepted by a cleric who had never realised what it was to feed even 1,000 men in an enemy's country. Lord Hailes should have understood the value of such *flimsy* evidence, yet he took the historian Hume severely to task for rejecting it.<sup>2</sup> The only sure data that have been preserved are the writs summoning 21,540 foot from twelve English counties. There may have been—there probably were—more, as is indicated by King Edward's expression *totum servitium nostrum*, and we know that there were Welsh, Irish, and Gascon contingents; but it is extremely improbable that the combatant force exceeded 45,000, including a large body of cavalry, besides baggage-train and camp-followers.

As for the Scottish army, the only guide in estimating its strength is the general agreement among early writers that it was about one-third that of the English. Barbour, accordingly, declares that King Robert brought 30,000 men into the field; but if he did so, it is very unlikely that he could keep them there for long, many of them being Highland clansmen, splendid fighters, but, as Lord George Murray and others found to their cost in later years, prone to melt away homewards when provender was not plentiful. If we reckon the four divisions composing King Robert's army at 3,000 or 3,500 each, we shall probably be near the truth, to which may be added the 500 light horse under Sir Robert Keith, making, say, about 15,000 in all. In that case, the invading force must have outnumbered the defenders by about three to one, and, of course, their equipment was far more complete.

The King of Scots enjoyed a substantial advantage in being able to choose the ground whereon the freedom of his people, and the destiny of his realm, were to be decided by ordeal of battle. To the south of Stirling, the only direction whence the English army could approach the fortress, there lies a tract of sound, undulating land, known at that time as the New Park, and reserved as a hunting

<sup>1</sup> It is notable that Sir Thomas Gray, the only soldier who wrote or dictated a chronicle in the fourteenth century, gives no estimate of the strength of either army.

<sup>2</sup> *Annals of Scotland*, ii. 53, note (ed. 1819).

ground for the royal household. On the eastern side this park was bounded, for a distance of three miles or so, by an abrupt declivity, where the ground falls more or less steeply to the level carse, a plain of alluvium through which the tidal portion of the Forth winds slowly to the sea. At the present day this carse is richly cultivated, and, although the soil is heavy clay, offers no serious obstacle to the passage of an army. Hundreds of thousands of passengers and millions of tons of goods are conveyed over it every year by the Caledonian Railway. But it was otherwise in the fourteenth century, when that plain was covered with deep wet peat—*Scottice*, ‘a moss flow’—which had all to be dug away and floated down the river before the underlying soil could be turned to agricultural account. Across the original surface it would have been vain for the English king to attempt to move his heavy cavalry and baggage-train—his *quadrigas*, as the author of ‘Vita Edwardi’ terms them.<sup>1</sup> Between the carse and the higher ground to the west, skirting the base of the acclivity whereon stood, and still stands, the village of St. Ninian’s, there was, indeed, a strip of dry ground—an ancient sea-beach—along which troops might desile with a very narrow front; but to attempt such a flank march before the Scottish army posted on the ridge 100 feet above them would have been to go in search of disaster.

King Robert, therefore, while keeping a vigilant eye upon this line of approach, prepared defences against attack from the direction of the Roman road. Two miles south of Stirling Castle the Bannock burn issues, at Park Mill, from a rocky glen in the Torwood, and flows (a trifling brook in summer) for three-quarters of a mile across the upper plain before plunging into another rocky gorge at Beaton’s Mill. Above and below the space between these two mills the Bannock is not practicable for cavalry, the sides of the glen being precipitous. Consequently, if the enemy’s approach through the carse might be dismissed from calculation as impracticable, the attack must be delivered on the space between the two mills upon a front proportionately contracted, a point of material advantage to the numerically weaker force, especially in days when shot and shrapnel were still undreamt of. King Robert, therefore,

<sup>1</sup> Mr. G. W. Mackenzie, in his recent volume, *Bannockburn* (Glasgow, Maclehose, 1913), strongly argues that the English did advance by this route, encamped on the evening before the battle in the carse to the north-east of St. Ninian’s, and were attacked there by the Scots on the following day. It is difficult, if not impossible, to reconcile this theory with the physical character of the ground as it then was.

took up a position in the New Park on rising ground to the north of the Bannock, barring the direct road to Stirling and covering the whole extent of the stream where it was alone possible for the enemy to attempt to cross it.

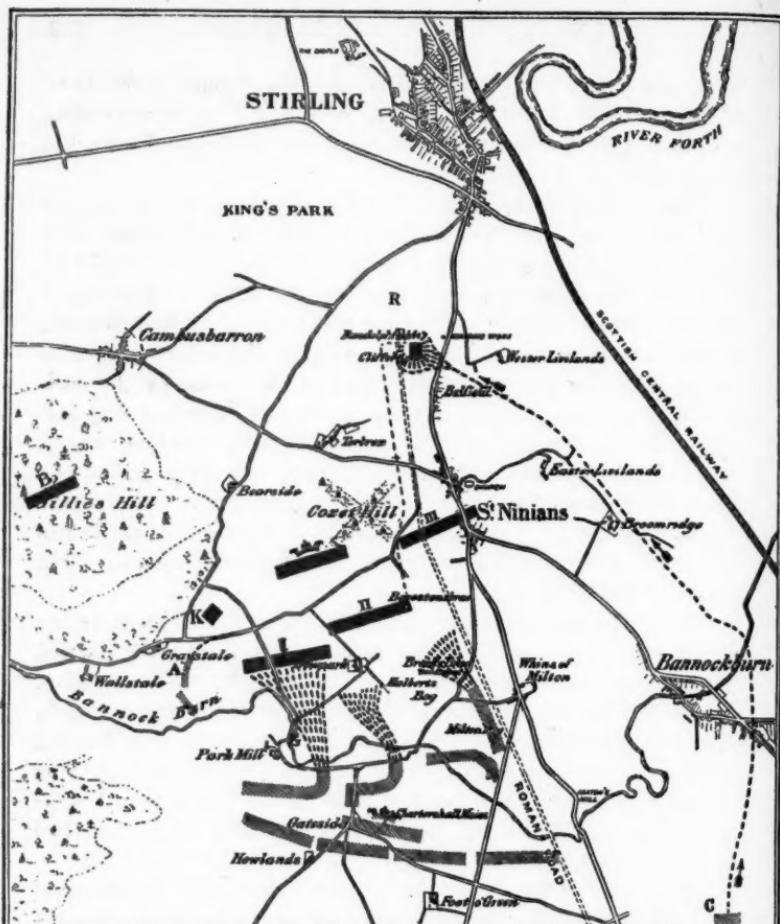
The Bannock itself, in that part of its course, offered no impediment to troops mounted or on foot. Not till it had crossed over would an advancing column find itself in difficulties. Right in front of the Scottish centre, between the line of 'schiltroms,'<sup>1</sup> and the stream, there lay, along the west side of the Roman road, a considerable morass. This has now been drained away, but in spring its limits may easily be traced in the tillage by the dark soil, and its two divisions are still known as Halbert's Bog and Milton Bog. The effect of this morass upon an attacking column was to confine it to two lines of advance—one along the Roman road, when it would be impossible to deploy before reaching the Whins of Milton (see map), immediately under the Scottish centre—the other through the fringe of the Torwood, between Park Mill and Halbert's Bog.

King Robert, well knowing that the English commanders would rely chiefly on their fine cavalry, personally superintended the preparation of these two lines of attack for their reception. He caused an immense number of little pits to be dug, a foot in diameter and twice as much in depth, which were then covered with sods resting on small sticks. Caltrops—iron spikes for laming horses—may have been used; but no earlier writer than George Buchanan mentions them, and Buchanan wrote more than two hundred years after the event.

The English army, having lain at Edinburgh on the night of Friday, June 21, marched next day to Falkirk,<sup>2</sup> about eight miles south of the Bannock burn. The Scots were encamped or bivouacked in the Torwood, where Mass was said at sunrise on Sunday, the 23rd, the Eve of St. John. They then moved out upon the appointed alignment in four divisions; the right division being nearest the Torwood, under Edward Bruce, with its right

<sup>1</sup> The principal arm of the Scottish infantry at this period was the pike; the formation in battle was the *schiltrom*, consisting of ranks in close column, resembling the Greek phalanx. In the presence of cavalry the rear ranks faced about, the flank files turning outwards; the outer ranks of all four faces knelt as in a modern infantry square, the inner ranks armed with longer pikes, which they levelled over the heads of their kneeling comrades.

<sup>2</sup> Edinburgh Castle had been captured by Thomas Randolph, King Robert's nephew, shortly before, and was dismantled or razed.



### FIELD OF BANNOCKBURN.



*The King of Scots, commanding the  
Scottish reserve.*



*Scottish Divisions.*

I    *Right Division, under Edward de Brus.*

II    *Centre Division, under Randolph.*

III    *Left Division under Douglas & Walter the Steward.*

K    *500 light horse, under Sir Robert de Keith, sent to disperse English archers.*

B    *Baggage train.*

R    *Randolph's encounter with de Clifford's and de Beaumont's cavalry.*



*The King of England.*



*English Divisions, thrown into confusion by the nature of the ground, attempting to cross the Bannock and deploy.*

G    *Gloucester's heavy cavalry charging.*

A    *English archers playing on Edward de Brus's flank.*

C    *Cavalry under Clifford and de Beaumont, sent forward on June 23rd to communicate with Stirling Castle.*

flank near the Bannock at the point where it issues from the steep glen ; the second division, forming the centre of the line, probably occupied the acclivity now known as Borestone Brae, under Thomas Randolph ; the third or left division, under Walter the Steward and James Douglas, was probably posted on the slopes to the south-east of Coxet Hill, with its left resting on the hamlet and church of St. Ninians. If this view of the disposition be correct, or approximately so (it must be confessed that there is a large element of speculation in it), these three divisions stood in echelon by the right, with the fourth, composed of the men of Carrick and Argyll, in reserve under King Robert himself. The baggage-guard and camp-followers were left in the hollow behind Gillies Hill.

It was near noon before the English advanced guard came in sight on the high ground near Plean. The weather was intensely hot, and, the troops being exhausted by their march from Falkirk,<sup>1</sup> a halt was called. Sir Thomas Gray states that Sir Philip de Mowbray had ridden out from Stirling to warn the English commanders about the obstructions made by the Scots in the outskirts of the Torwood. A council of war was held to decide whether the Scots army should be attacked at once or the assault put off till the following day. There was, indeed, no time to spare. If Stirling Castle were not effectively relieved before sunset on the following day, Mowbray would be compelled to surrender, on pain of forfeiting his honour and knighthood—so inexorable were the rules of chivalrous war.

While the English commanders were deliberating, the Earl of Gloucester undertook a reconnaissance with the advanced guard, driving in the Scottish pickets. King Robert, riding along the front of his 'schiltroms,' with the royal diadem round his cap of 'corbyle,'<sup>2</sup> attracted notice from one of Gloucester's young knights, Sir Henry de Bohun,<sup>3</sup> who pricked forward as if challenging the King of Scots to single combat. None could have blamed the King for declining the offer ; he was mounted on

‘ane gay palfray,  
Litill and joly,’

<sup>1</sup> The anonymous author of *Vita Edwardi Secundi* (a work assigned by Dr. Stubbs to A.D. 1325 or thereabouts) states that even before they left Falkirk ‘the horses, knights, and foot soldiers were exhausted by hard marching and hunger, wherefore they are not to be blamed if they did not behave very well.’

<sup>2</sup> *Cuir bouilli*—jacked leather.

<sup>3</sup> Gray, describing the encounter, says the English champion was Sir Percy de Mountforth—a singular error.

and his only weapon was a battleaxe, whereas Sir Henry, *cap-d-pie* in mail, bestrode a powerful war horse and carried lance, mace, and sword. A thrill of dismay shook the Scottish ranks when they beheld their King turn rein and ride straight for the English champion. De Bohun bore down upon him at speed, lance in rest ; but the King, causing his nimble palfrey to avoid the shock, dealt his opponent a terrific blow with the axe, ‘cleaving his head,’ says Barbour, ‘from crown to chin.’ The axe-shaft broke, and the King, losing balance, fell ‘all flatlingis’ on the sward.

Not less in keeping with chivalrous usage was another episode on this Eve of St. John. While Gloucester threatened the Scottish front, he detached a squadron of 300 knights and men-at-arms—under Sir Robert de Clifford and Sir Henry de Beaumont<sup>1</sup>—to establish communication with the garrison of Stirling by riding round the left flank of the enemy, under screen of the wooded declivity dividing the upper ground from the level carse. King Robert, foreseeing some such attempt, had specially charged his nephew, Thomas Randolph, commander of the second division, to be on his guard to intercept any movement of the kind. What, therefore, was his chagrin, on returning from his duel with de Bohun, to descry a clump of English spears passing round his left flank. He sent a sharp message to Randolph, telling him that he had ‘let fall a rose from his chaplet.’ Randolph’s attention, like that of the whole Scottish line of battle, had been absorbed by the King’s encounter with the English knight. Horrified at the consequences of his neglect, he set off with a detachment in pursuit of the English cavalry ; a futile endeavour, for he had no mounted troops. Sir Thomas Gray is the only writer who has made it possible to understand what followed. His father, the elder Sir Thomas, rode in that squadron, so the son must be reckoned a good authority in the matter.

Sir Henry de Beaumont, perceiving Randolph’s infantry moving at speed after the cavalry, cried, ‘Wait a little ! Let them come on ; let them out on the plain.’

‘Sir,’ said wary Sir Thomas Gray, ‘I doubt that we shall all have enough to do soon enough, without seeking more.’<sup>2</sup>

‘Look you !’ retorted de Beaumont, ‘if you are afraid you can ride away.’

<sup>1</sup> Ancestors respectively of the present 23rd Baron de Clifford and of Baroness Beaumont, eleventh holder of that peerage.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Sire, ieo me dout qe taunt dorrez en le hour pur quoi tout auerount trop test.’—*Scalacronica*, folio 208b.

'Sir,' replied Gray, 'it is not for fear that I shall retire this day.'

So de Beaumont halted his squadron, allowed the Scots to come up, and then sounded the charge. Randolph's formation was the usual 'schiltrom,' the outer ranks kneeling, with the butts of their pikes firmly planted. Vain was every attempt to break that hedge of steel. Sir William d'Eyncourt was among the first to fall; Sir Thomas Gray's horse was impaled, and he was taken prisoner. Repulsed again and again, Clifford's men fell into confusion, the Scottish phalanx remaining 'as ane hurcheon'—like a hedgehog. Douglas was now seen approaching to reinforce Randolph; and Clifford, collecting his scattered cavalry, drew off, leaving many dead and prisoners. At the south end of Melville Terrace, in the modern town of Stirling, two large stones mark the probable site of this affair, on ground still called Randolph's field. The younger Gray, in his description of this encounter, remarks that the Scots had learned how to fight on foot against cavalry from the Flemish, whose famous victory at Courtrai in 1302 was called the Battle of the Spurs, from the great number of spurs taken as trophies from slain or captured knights.

The Earl of Gloucester, on returning from his reconnaissance and rejoining the English headquarters, found that the council of war had resulted in a postponement of active operations till the morrow. For some reason, difficult to apprehend, the army moved down from the sound, dry ground about Plean and encamped on the wet carse—*vn mauueis parfounf ruscelle marras*, as Gray describes it. Equally unintelligible is another statement by that writer—namely, that King Robert, feeling that the honour of his arms had been sufficiently vindicated by the double discomfiture inflicted that day upon those of England, had decided to evacuate the position during the night, rather than risk a general engagement with forces so greatly superior to his own. He would resume his accustomed strategy of falling back before the invader, removing or destroying everything required for the maintenance of a foreign army.

Howbeit, just as the troops were preparing for the march, Sir Alexander de Seton, a Scottish knight in the King of England's service, rode into the Scottish camp as a deserter, claimed audience of the King, assured him that the English were sorely disheartened, and that now was the time of action if ever he meant to keep the crown of Scotland. If this story be true (it rests solely on Gray's authority), King Robert at once issued orders countermanding the retreat.

At dawn on St. John's Day the Abbot of Inchaffray once more celebrated Mass in the Scottish camp ; then the men broke their fast, and the King conferred knighthood on Walter the Steward and James of Douglas.<sup>1</sup>

At sunrise—that is, about 3.30 A.M.—the four divisions moved out of the wood upon the alignment fixed by King Robert.<sup>2</sup> The position was probably much the same as that on the previous day, namely, parallel with, and a little to the south of, the present road between Graystale and St. Ninians.

While the Scottish divisions were being marshalled into their places in the line, the heads of the English columns came in view—

‘ That richt as angelis schane brichtly ’

—the morning rays lighting up the forest of gay banners and flashing upon the burnished harness of knights and men-at-arms. Not only in brilliancy was this dazzling array in strange contrast with the sombre, steadfast masses of the Scots ; for, if Barbour's statement be accepted, the English columns were already in some confusion owing to the cramped limits wherein they had to move. The Lanercost Chronicle mentions eleven divisional commanders ; Barbour says they moved in ten columns—

‘ But quhether it was  
Throu the gret stratnes of the plas  
That tha war in to bid fichting,  
Or that it was for abasing,  
I wat nocht, but in a schiltrum  
It semit tha war all and sum,  
Outane the vaward anerly  
That with ane richt gret cumpany  
Be thaimselvin arait war.’

That is, the main body lost the intervals of its formation and became more closely crowded as it moved forward into narrower ground, but Gloucester's advanced guard remained in good order.

Of the battle which ensued and the tactics adopted on either side,

<sup>1</sup> No doubt these two officers, jointly commanding the 3rd Division of the Scots army, were already knights bachelor, and now received the higher honour of knights banneret, entitling them to display a banner instead of a pennon.

<sup>2</sup> ‘ Tuk the plane full apertly ’ (*The Brus*, canto i. 15) ; ‘ Tinrent reddement lour chemyn deuers lost des Engles ’ (*Scalacronica*, folio 208b.) These passages have been cited by Mr. W. Mackenzie in support of his contention that the Scots assumed the offensive ; but I don't think there is more in them than is implied in the formation of a line of battle.

one has to conjure up the most probable course of affairs from such material as is supplied by the most nearly contemporary chronicles, contradictory as they are in many respects. Gray, the most trustworthy of them, dismisses the whole affair with exasperating brevity. Barbour, on the other part, having an epic on hand, undermines our confidence by putting long speeches, running to hundreds of verses, into King Robert's mouth. He speaks, indeed, of one important incident not recorded elsewhere, so far as I recollect, which it is extremely likely took place. He says that when King Edward beheld the motley host assembled in the New Park, contrasting strongly with his own magnificent array, he turned to Sir Ingram Umphraville and asked him whether these fellows really dared to fight. Umphraville assured him that they certainly meant fighting, and urged the King to feign retreat, and to leave his tents standing, which would prove an irresistible bait to the Scots, drawing them off the strong position they had taken up. So soon as the formidable 'schiltroms' were dissolved, the King would have the enemy at his mercy. But Edward would none of it. 'No man shall say that I even feigned retreat before such a rabble'; and he bade his trumpets sound the charge. Umphraville's advice was probably sound; and it was perhaps well that King Robert's levies were not exposed to what would have been a severe strain upon their discipline.

It comes out pretty clearly from a collation of narratives that the action began by Gloucester's advanced guard attacking the Scottish right, under Edward Bruce, while a cloud of English archers, extended in the Torwood, poured galling volleys upon the dense 'schiltrom.' King Robert here used his handful of cavalry to good purpose, sending them, under Sir Robert Keith, to clear off the archers, which was effectively done.

Gloucester's fine cavalry must have been thrown into disarray in passing between Halbert's Bog and the Torwood over the narrow strip of ground honeycombed with pits; but they got through it somehow, and charged repeatedly upon Edward Bruce's 'schiltrom.' The Scots stood their ground stiffly, receiving the horses on the long pikes. Gloucester's charger was disembowelled; the gallant earl, falling, could not rise because of his heavy armour, and was done to death as he lay. Randolph moved to Edward Bruce's support; King Robert brought up the reserve into the fighting line, and the first attack was repulsed with heavy slaughter. Nay, but was not the first also the last attack? Gray declares that the Scottish line of

'schiltroms' advanced; that the English columns could not operate for want of room; and that the cavalry, 'thrown into confusion by the thrust of pikes, began to fly.' It is probable that, while the main attack had been delivered on the Scottish front, a flanking column had been sent, by way of the carse, to turn King Robert's left. Anyhow, the combat overflowed into the carse, for we read of numbers of fugitives being drowned in the Forth, and Gray describes how 'the troops in the English rear fell back upon the ditch of Bannockburn' (that is, the tidal portion, winding through the carse between banks of sticky clay), 'tumbling over one another.'

The repulse, we are told, was turned into a rout by something which had no place in King Robert's tactics. The baggage-guard and camp-followers, posted in the hollow behind the height, still called Gillies' Hill,<sup>1</sup> had climbed that hill to become excited spectators of the battle. When they beheld the English falling back in confusion, they were fired with patriotism or lust of plunder (perhaps both), and rushed down the hill with loud shouts, waving extemporised banners made of blankets. The word passed through the English ranks that here was a column of fresh troops; some of the knights may have pronounced the direful words 'Sauve qui peut!' and the panic spread.

Frightful must have been that scene of carnage. There was no battle smoke in those days to veil the butchery; the midsummer sun shone down upon the splendid English array, paralysed by its very numbers, falling thick under the cruel pikes. King Edward narrowly escaped capture. Gray condenses the crisis of the battle into a few vivid, but mournful, sentences.

'Those who were appointed to [attend] the King's rein, perceiving the disaster, led the King by the rein off the field towards the castle, and off he rode, though much against the grain.<sup>2</sup> As the Scottish knights, who were on foot, laid hold of the housing of the King's charger endeavouring to stop him, he struck at them so violently with his mace that there was none that he touched who did not fall.

'As those who had the King's rein were thus drawing him always forward, one of them,<sup>3</sup> Giles de Argentin, a famous knight who had lately come over sea from the wars of the Emperor Henry of Luxembourg, said to the King :

<sup>1</sup> From the Gaelic *giola*—a servant.

<sup>2</sup> 'Maugre git enhust qi enuyte sen departist.'—*Scalacronica*, folio 208b.

<sup>3</sup> The other was Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke. Sir Giles was reputed the third knight in Christendom.

"Sire, your rein was committed to me ; you are now in safety ; there is your castle, where your person may be safe. I am not accustomed to fly, nor am I going to begin now. I commend you to God." Then, setting spurs to his horse, he returned into the mellay, where he was slain.'

King Edward's horse had been piked, but they brought him a fresh one, and Pembroke rode off with him to Stirling Castle, where they demanded admission. But the brave Argentin had miscalculated. Here was no safety for the person of any Englishman. Sir Philip Mowbray declined to lower his drawbridge, for, said he, the place had not been relieved, and he had no choice but to surrender. So they turned rein, the King and his bodyguard of five hundred. How they managed to pass through or round the stricken field is not easy to understand ; but they did so, and set off at speed for Linlithgow. Douglas caught sight of them and begged King Robert to let him give chase. Sixty lancers were all that could be spared, and away they went in hot pursuit of that rich prize. Meeting Sir Lawrence de Abernethy, a Scottish knight who was bringing fourscore men-at-arms to join the English army, Douglas convinced him that his best plan was to change sides ; which he promptly did, and joined in the hunt. They overtook the party at Winchburgh, but the bodyguard was too strong to be meddled with. Douglas had to content himself with hanging on their skirts, till the friendly Earl of March received the fugitives to shelter in his castle of Dunbar.<sup>1</sup> Thence King Edward escaped in a small boat to Berwick.

No estimate can be attempted of the loss in the English army. There is a spot about a mile and a half south of the Bannock still called the Bloody Fauld, commemorating the stand made by some English troops. The tradition is that they all perished. Twenty-one of Edward's barons and bannerets are known to have fallen, including his nephew the Earl of Gloucester, the famous cavalry commander Sir Robert de Clifford, Sir Giles de Argentin, and the Marshal of England, who was drowned in the tidal part of the Bannock. Forty-two knights bachelor are said to have been

<sup>1</sup> Perhaps the obscurity of Barbour's northern English will allow of his own forcible description of the pursuit being quoted without offence :

'And he (Douglas) was awais by them ner,  
He let tham noct haf sic laser  
As anis water for to ma.'

killed<sup>1</sup>; a proof, were one wanted, of the desperate nature of the conflict; for barons and knights were far too valuable to be needlessly slaughtered. To take them prisoners and hold them to ransom was the coveted prize. Nor was there any scarcity of prisoners of rank. Twenty-two barons and bannerets, sixty knights bachelor, and several clergy were taken. According to the custom of war, a proportion of these were allotted to the King as commander-in-chief. Among these were his kinsman Sir Marmaduke de Twenge, and his old comrade Sir Rafe de Monthermer, who had carried King Edward's *scale*, or shield, in the battle. We have it on the authority of the English chronicler Walsingham, that King Robert released both of them unconditionally.

Of those who escaped from the field, who shall declare how many reached the Border? The veteran Aymer de Valence, Earl of Pembroke, did so, arriving at Carlisle on foot; but of the common soldiers many hundreds must have perished at the hands of the countrymen on the moors. Never was there a victory more decisive, seldom has the punishment of the vanquished been so severe.

On the victorious side the casualty list appears to have been a light one. Barbour says that two Scottish knights only were killed in action—Sir William Vipont and Sir Walter de Ros. The last-named was a dear friend of Edward Bruce, who loved his sister *per amouris*, and thereby incurred the hatred of his brother-in-law, David, Earl of Atholl. This gave rise to an incident which some historians have not rightly understood. Atholl was King Robert's Constable of Scotland, but this did not hinder him from raiding Edward Bruce's dépôt and stores at Cambuskenneth on the night before the battle—Sir William of Airth being killed in defending them. This was an act of private feud, wholly apart from the international dispute, for Atholl resented the affront put upon his sister, Isobel, by her husband's amour with Isobel de Ros; but it made Scotland too hot to hold Atholl. His earldom and lands were forfeited and bestowed upon Sir Neil Campbell, King Robert's brother-in-law, Atholl himself spending the rest of his days in England.

Edward Bruce's wife, Isobel of Atholl, must have died before

<sup>1</sup> According to English chroniclers, Barbour's statement that 700 pairs of spurs were taken from the persons of dead knights is too absurd to merit attention. Nevertheless the English chronicler, Walsingham, declares that 700 gentlemen of coat-armour lost their lives.

1317, when Edward obtained a Papal dispensation to marry Isobel de Ros, by whom he had a son, Alexander. But Edward himself was killed at the battle of Dundalk shortly after, so the marriage probably never took place.

Just as the Scottish historian, Bower, attributed the victory to the piety of King Robert, so did the English chronicler, Geoffrey le Baker, set down King Edward's escape to the direct intervention of the Virgin, whom he invoked during his flight, vowing that if she befriended him he would build and dedicate to her a house for poor Carmelites to accommodate four-and-twenty students of theology. 'This vow,' says Baker, 'he afterwards fulfilled at Oxford, despite the remonstrance of Hugh le Despenser'; and that was the origin of Oriel College.

On June 27, King Edward issued a humiliating proclamation from Berwick, warning all persons against obeying orders issued under his signet, whereof the keeper, Roger de Northburgh, with his two clerks, had been taken prisoner. King Robert chivalrously returned the prize to its owner, on condition that it should never be used again.

*WITH MISTRAL IN PROVENCE.*

ALTHOUGH the poems of Frédéric Mistral were written with a definite purpose, they do not, as is so often the case, suffer from this limitation. His great aim was to raise the Provençal tongue to its ancient status as a literary language, and to this end he carefully sought out the words and phrases of the 'lengo dou Miéjour' (the language of the South) which, though looked down upon as a mere patois, was still spoken in much of its original purity. Not only did he stereotype it in his monumental dictionary, but he crystallised it by making it the medium of poetical expression.

He and a circle of kindred spirits banded themselves together under the fanciful name of 'félibres,' and, like the 'cigale' they chose for their badge, sang of the warmth and sunshine and joys of Provence. Yet the sphere of their influence might have remained a restricted one, had it not been that the true genius which illuminated the verses of Mistral kindled an answering glow in the hearts of his countrymen, and has spread his fame wherever literature is appreciated. Though his tales are romantic and imaginative, and while in his delineation of the Provençal character he has missed the fine humour of Daudet nor quite gained the virile realism of Aicard, they are nevertheless visions of pure delight, seen through a mind as sunny and tender as the brilliant sunshine and soft olive-clad slopes of his native country.

Our acquaintance with Mistral was brought about by the purchase of a tract of land in Provence, where we determined to build a truly typical Provençal house and surround it with gardens and vineyards in the Provençal style. It was not without considerable difficulty that our architect was weaned away from his preconceived views of what a villa should be like, a villa to be entered from a steep marble staircase, one which might possibly break out into a fearsome eruption of blue faïence bosses on its stucco façade. We protested that as the property was really in Provence, and not on the Riviera, it was a pity to add another to the Parisio-Italian structures, whose glaring white cubes thickly bestrew the whole coast. It was when we enlisted the interest of the great poet that the architect was converted to the view which he had formerly set down as the ravings of the mad English.

Mistral entered *con amore* into our plans for the creation of a

Provençal Castéu (country house), even teaching us the correct spelling and pronunciation of its name. He pointed out bits in Arles that were worthy of imitation, and told us of outlying *bourg*s where some special architectural features could be studied. When we explained how our idea was to include a cloister, and that we were anxious to find some that could be used as models, he suggested expeditions to many small chartreuses quite off the beaten track, where these cloister courts could be studied, whose existence was barely known beyond the limits of the communes in which they were situated.

Not only was the outward appearance of the house of interest to Mistral, who approved of its low-pitched roof, its 'gênoises' and squat turret, its long, low façade and the arched space, which he christened the 'Amiradou,' the local name for a spot whence a view can be *admired*; but he was anxious that it should be furnished correctly, and spent hours with us in his Museo Arletan while he pointed out the various 'goods and chattels' we ought to collect. High-backed, four-railed chairs, seated with golden straw, for the bedrooms; square leather-covered ones for the dining-room; and a sofa of honour, to find a place in a recess in the living-room. He showed us the carved 'armoires,' 'bahuts,' and 'pannetières,' the walnut-wood spice- and salt-boxes for the kitchen, the little glass lamps for burning olive-oil, the green bulb-shaped wine-bottles, the brass warming-pans, and long pointed bellows, the earthenware fountains to contain perfumed water for sprinkling the hands after meals, and many other household goods. He told us of the neat checked material with which to make 'para féus' to prevent the wood-fires from smoking, and drew special attention to the tall grandfather clocks which strike twice, at five minutes before the time and again at the actual hour, a quaint testimony to the southern temperament.

He was a delightful guide, and with a word here and there could conjure up the Provençal past, thrilling his audience with the stories of the 'chevelure d'or' or the 'Tarasque,' and making us understand the peasant life of Provence, whose relics he had gathered with such loving care. He had stories of many of the old customs—how the girls used to climb Mont Ventoux on May Day, and there arrange stones in occult designs, which were supposed to propitiate the little love god. He explained the ceremony of the Yule Log, and the trick that mothers play the children on the Feast of the Epiphany; the little ones are always eager to try to

see the Three Kings arrive, and hurry off in any direction they are told in order to meet them, only to find that the 'mages' meanwhile have, of course, come and gone by another way, though, to the children's delight, they have left behind them their three plaster effigies in the crèche as a token of the reality of their visit.

Mistral was ever genial and kind, and never seemed to tire of our bombardment of questions; and one day when a large party of the society of 'cousins,' or gnats (established in imitation of his 'cigales'), swarmed into the museum and begged him, with the persistence of the insects whose symbol they wore, to write his name on quite a pack of postcards, he obligingly did so, laughing all the while and making jokes in his loved Provençal tongue till the place rang with merriment. When he accompanied us through the streets to the other sights of Arles, his progress was almost royal: all doffed their hats to the 'grand maître' whose tall figure was so well known.

His appearance was most striking. He had regular features, a fine brow, framed with white hair; a well-shaped mouth, half hidden by the moustache and beard he wore à l'impériale, and wonderfully expressive eyes, that glowed with fire or beamed with tenderness while he talked of his native country. He had a rich talking voice and a fine baritone, and would, without preparation or accompaniment, break into singing, rolling out with genuine pleasure the pathetic air of 'Magali' or the patriotic song of 'La Coupe.' He, like the trouvères of old, evidently felt the lilt of words not only as a poet but as a musician, and would often turn a French phrase he had been using into its equivalent Provençal, in order to dwell lovingly on the melodious syllables. He constantly extolled the richness of the language, pointing out many subtle shades of meaning that could be expressed with fuller grace and facility in Provençal than in French.

One of our party ventured to indite a sonnet in his honour. Although he did not understand English, he was charmed with the rhythmic sound of its lines; and when its imagery was explained to him, he was so pleased that he had a translation made by a 'félibre,' and published it in the *Provençal Journal*. He was presented with the little poem one day we met him in Arles, and taking the authoress by the hand, he bent over it saying, with tears in his eyes, 'You, Mademoiselle, are a true félibresse. I will give you the "pervenche."' This was a great honour, the decoration being the grade among the félibres granted to foreigners.

Amid the ancient glories of Arles, Mistral played the rôle of the learned historian and antiquary versed in classical and mediæval lore, but at Maillane in his own village he was truly the poet of Provence. The simple 'mas' or farmhouse, where he lived, had been the home of his forefathers for generations, and he was proud of his descent from this long line of those who had lived and worked and died in this quiet, out-of-the-way spot. He was never so happy as here, and in later years rarely left it except for his weekly visit to the Arles Museum. He refused all invitations to distant festivities in his honour, for he said, ' If I went to one I should have to go to all, and then I should never be at home.'

The village of Maillane lies in a wide plain; the fertile land all around is highly cultivated, and the poet loved its remoteness. He did not like the advent of strangers into his country. He said they brought in ways and ideas unsuited to the people. In this, he referred to the crowd of foreigners who spend their winters on the littoral; but added with evident relief, ' My namesake keeps them away from hereabouts,' and pointed to the rows of cypress trees that a violent 'mistral' was mercilessly bending into a variety of contortions. He had, however, a great appreciation of the English race, and approved the 'Entente Cordiale,' writing the following inscription for a frieze in our Castéu, sculptured to commemorate that event:

'Aliénor de Prouvenço que s'envai espousa Enri III d'Anglo-Terro, toca la man à sa sorre Margarido de Franço mouié d'ou rei Sant Louis, e presumisson entre éli en se parlant prouvençau la futuro amistanço de Franço e d'Anglo-Terro.'<sup>1</sup>

Mistral's house stands at the end of the village street, from which, through a doorway in a wall, the garden that surrounds it is entered. When we last saw it, it was full of spring flowers, which were the special care of Madame Mistral. Vivid tulips and stock-gillyflowers filled the 'platebandes,' above them blossoming quince-trees and trailing weeping willows swayed in the wind, while the path was dappled with the blue shadows of the plane-trees. There were roses too everywhere, and the subtle perfume of the 'glycine' came to us borne on the warm gusts. Mistral preferred the native trees and plants to any of the newer importations,

<sup>1</sup> 'Eleanor of Provence, on her way to espouse Henry III of England, greets her sister Margaret of France wife of the king Saint Louis, thus foreshadowing between them, while speaking together in Provençal, the future friendship of France and England.'

and though he admired the mimosas, he was glad when he heard we had not planted many of these aliens in our 'domaine.'

He took a delight in escorting us around, telling as we went pretty legends of the flowers. He called the rows of cypresses the 'regiments' set to guard the peasants' crops from the fierce invading winds, and made us listen to the swallows repeating the Sacred Name in their gentle twitterings as they perched on the red roof.

Wherever the poet went his dog followed at his heels, and when he and Madame Mistral good-naturedly posed for us to take their photograph he, as a matter of course, took his place in the group. He always sat at his master's side, his chin resting on his knee, and could not bear to be parted from him. It is reported that his grief was so great at the loss of his master that he has pined away.

The house itself is a white plastered building with smallish windows and dark green shutters. The roof has a short pitch on one side, and a long slope in the typical Provençal way on the side exposed to the wind. On a southern wall is a painted sundial, whose motto the poet allowed us to copy for our own façade :

‘Gai lezert, béu toun soléu  
L’ouro passo qué trop léu  
E doman ploura, beléu ! ’<sup>1</sup>

Within the house all was simple, fresh, and wholesome. The floors were tiled with slippery red 'tomettes,' and the rooms were plainly furnished, yet showed great taste. One room was a library, and another, much bigger and higher, was a sort of dining-parlour. In the glass cupboards that were ranged along one side were kept the decorations and orders, parchment addresses, and photographs with august signatures, that had been showered on the author of 'Mireille' by the rulers of every civilised country. Yet, though he showed them with a fine appreciation of the spirit in which they were offered, it was the honour done through him to Provence that really gratified him.

One of the results of the Provençal revival which seemed to delight him most was the popularity of the Arlésienne dress, which can be worn by rich and poor alike. It is no actual survival, but its details were pieced together from various local costumes worn

<sup>1</sup> 'Happy little lizard, drink of thy sunshine,  
The hours pass all too fast,  
And to-morrow the rain will come perchance.'

in different places in Provence, and dating as it does from the 'sixties' it has a dainty early-Victorian effect, which is quite charming. No headdress was ever more becoming than the 'pur velout' of the 'coifo d'Arle,' crowning the classical head of some statuesque beauty.

Mistral was a fine conversationalist and had the gift of leading the talk from one subject to another. During one discussion, the poet expressed his admiration for the first Napoleon. He spoke of his wonderful influence and the power he had of winning men to his side—'We Frenchmen,' he said, 'are by nature hero-worshippers and idealists, and if once our imagination is aroused, we are ready to undergo any self-sacrifice for the person or cause.' He also discussed modern literature, deplored some of its tendencies, though acknowledging its power and vividness; yet contending that truth need not always be unlovely, and that virtue should never cease to be the poet's highest inspiration.

Mistral had a firm religious faith founded, perhaps, rather on inherited tradition than built up by philosophic reasoning. There was, indeed, a simplicity—almost a naivety—in his doctrine that was very touching. The revolt against religion in modern France pained him. He regretted the loss of the cult that had been the mainspring of so much that was beautiful in his country, and dreaded the deterioration of the national character that he considered would be inevitable with the adoption of a purely secular standpoint. But in all his talks, Mistral returned instinctively to his favourite theme—Provence, her history, her people, and, above all, her language. His creed, though intensely patriotic and inculcating a pride in provincialism, was strenuously opposed to any separatist tendency. It was only a nationalist movement so far as it concerned the past; the present and future of Provence were indissolubly bound up with the destinies of France. He was well aware that while the glorification of one of her provinces gave an added lustre to that country, Provence had gained in a far wider sense by becoming an integral part of the great French nation.

Few have carried out their life-work more completely than Frédéric Mistral. He found Provence with but a small group who remembered or appreciated her ancient glories, and he made it a labour of love to carry out endless researches into her archives, to preserve her documents and traditions, and, with a touch of the wand of his genius, establish her language once more in its place of honour.

His achievement is undoubtedly a great one, and although in the charming words of his poem 'Moun Toumbéu' he modestly predicts that the name of him who is now called 'King of Provence' will in time only be heard in the song of the 'grihet brun' (the little brown cigale), yet a personality such as his can never be really forgotten.

His tomb, which was made during his lifetime, is a domed structure, a copy of the pavilion of 'La reine Jeanne' at Les Beaux. He expressed his gratitude for the inspiration which led him to adopt as the design for his last resting-place this beautiful little building that links so perfectly the Romanesque and Renaissance arts of the South, and the epitaph, which he himself selected, sets forth in simple phrase the spirit in which his work was carried out—

'Non nobis Domine, non nobis  
Sed nomini tuo  
Et Provinciæ nostræ  
Da gloriam.'

MARGARET AMHERST.

*ON A LITTLE CHALK-STREAM.*

CHALK-STREAM men are not beloved always and everywhere. This seems a hard saying concerning any son of Izaak, but the fact cannot be denied. There are a good many possible explanations of this, among which might be reckoned the oil-bottle ('Pooh !'), the tin of grease ('Pah !'), the high-powered field-glasses ('Bah !'), and other objects which the plain man of north or west greets with exclamatory scorn. But there may be a worse cause of offence than these—the chalk-stream fisherman's mental attitude, and the manner in which he sometimes declares it.

Not all who fish in chalk-streams are to be labelled as chalk-stream men, for the complete angler is happy almost anywhere so long as he can fish, and he understands that essential values depend to a large extent on circumstances. But there is a type of man for whom the chalk-stream holds all that there is of trout fishing in a somewhat scantly furnished world. To such a man, placed by some chance in a hilly region where no chalk-springs enrich the rivers, the trout seem small, and when he sees them he at once says how small they are. He may even say how very small. Which naturally irks the proud possessor of the two dozen, and of two half-pounders which have wrestled their way to the top of the catch—a curious habit in half-pounders which invites the consideration of men of science.

Things might perhaps be forgiven and forgotten if the high-and-dry one stopped at that. Unhappily he cannot stop. The power of words is upon him, and he must continue though he be stoned out of that village—not that such a possibility would occur to him ; he is blissfully unconscious of anything wrong. So he goes on in this fashion : 'I've been catching and returning fish like that all day' ; and he points to a very decent trout which weighs a good three ounces, the sort of trout that is useful in establishing the 'four to the pound' average of which we hear so much. Of it your tactful man, who knows what is what, says, 'Ah, a nice little quarter-pounder.'

The chalk-stream man cannot, by reason of his preconceived ideas, be tactful about anything much under a pound, so he speaks of the three-ounce fish as he finds it, and he finds it a fishlet. This is grievous, but it is odds that it will not be the whole of the trouble.

Once his tongue is a-wag the misguided fellow is pretty sure to go from bad to worse, and he will almost certainly tell the other all about the Test. For a man whose record trout is one of a pound and a quarter from the Dibble (caught in 1893, but remembered as though it were yesterday) I can imagine nothing more infuriating than to be told 'all about the Test' by a well-meaning stranger, whose idea of a trout of a pound and a quarter is of something on the border-line between the sizeable and the undersized. Consider how in such a telling three-quarter pounders are returned with a prodigal, though careful, hand. Pounders swim through the story as minnows through a culvert. Two-pounders riot in it. The three-pounder is dotted about, and the four-pounder is not altogether out of sight. The listener, growing red in the face with scarce-dissembled fury, asks himself what he has done to deserve this outpouring of mendacity. Is it that this person with the empty creel seeks to humiliate him, *him* the captor of two dozen weighing nearly six pounds ?

Perchance he breaks away then and there. Perchance he is reduced to a kind of glaring immobility, in which he must listen to incredible stories of tiny hooks, of dense weedbeds and unintelligible jugglings with rod and line, of flies which float down the stream like vast fleets of little ships. In either case he is filled with active dislike for his tormentor, and takes the earliest opportunity of abusing him to a sympathetic audience. Meanwhile the chalk-stream man, good, earnest fellow, goes on his way happily conscious of an effort to spread the light in dark places. Next time he visits the Dibble, maybe, some of these local anglers will be using the dry-fly to the great improvement and refining of their sport, and blessing the name of the good angel whom they entertained unawares.

Of wilful purpose, of course, no chalk-stream man would so wring a brother's heart, but the lesson of comparative values must be hard learning for an angler who really does think in pounds and not in ounces, which may be the case if he frequents some of the best parts of the Test or Kennet. How shall he bring himself to joyful acquiescence in the standards of Exe or Barle ? Not that the standards of Test or Kennet are necessarily final. I remember how a very quiet man, the satisfied exhibitor of a nice dish of quarter-pounders, listened politely to a longish dissertation on the marvels of chalk-stream fishing, and when it was finished asked, 'Have you ever fished Loch Achanalt ?' No, Loch Achanalt

was not within his new friend's experience. So we had a few details about it, details running from about two and a half to six and three-quarter pounds, all caught on fly—some of them even, if I remember truly, on dry-fly. The narrative made some of us very discontented with our chalk-streams, at any rate for the moment.

Nor are the highest standards of Test or Kennet to be taken as typical of chalk-streams in general. An average weight of some two pounds is altogether exceptional. Most of the chalk-streams have done handsomely by the angler to whom they have given trout averaging a pound, while a two-pounder is to be considered a big fish, and a three-quarter-pounder as a rule one of lawful size. On the whole these streams show a considerable similarity in the weight of their trout, and presumably are much of a muchness as food-producers. Rivers so widely sundered as the Itchen and the Driffield Beck in Yorkshire would probably show very little difference in the average weight of a season's catch if complete figures could be produced and compared.

In smaller streams a greater contrast is sometimes found. I know one little stream, now alas! sadly neglected and decayed, where, if it were well looked after, the average weight of the trout would be fully a pound and a half, perhaps even two pounds. I have had one fish of three pounds fourteen ounces from it, and once had another fish on for a quarter of an hour which was every ounce of five pounds. A disaster in the weeds ended that adventure, and at the time I should not greatly have cared if it had ended me too! In earlier days I believe the same stream has yielded one or two trout of considerably greater weight—trout which it seems hardly decent to mention when it is recorded that the water is nowhere more than about twenty feet in width, and in most places is hardly three feet deep. A nine-pounder in such a trickle seems as much out of place as a prize ox in a pigsty. There is an explanation, however, and that is that the stream is tributary to, and partly fed by the hatches of, a bigger river, and is used by some of the older fish at spawning time. Once up, they have some difficulty in getting back, and finding their quarters not uncomfortable they may stay there and grow to a ponderous age. I fancy that most of the little chalk-streams which contain really heavy trout owe something to the bigger river into which they run.

One of the prettiest streams in Hampshire has no such advantage, but winds safe to sea along its own bed. A more delightful chalk-stream in miniature no man could hope to find. It is like the Test

writ very small, with all its features clear but tiny. There are intoxicated little ripples, sober little pools, contrary little eddies, turbulent little hatch holes, and all the rest of the scenery complete. The weed-beds are circumscribed but vigorous, the accumulations of mud insignificant yet definite, and in places the banks quake like their betters, while a man may subside into little quagmires just as he would in more important places. Happily he does not subside very far, so he gets a sense of adventure without undue risk or discomfort.

As the river, so the trout. They also are built on a small, though perfect, scale. Their average weight is about ten ounces; by that I mean the average weight of trout killed on the fishery which I have specially in mind. In some parts of the stream the average may be a little lower than this—half a pound perhaps. Nowhere, probably, is it very much higher. A pounder is looked upon as an achievement, and the biggest caught by any rod on the water in question during two seasons did not exceed a pound and a quarter.

Size, however, is not the only criterion of merit, and smaller trout often have qualities denied to big ones. That is certainly the case with these. If the two-pounders of the Test behaved with their impetuous vigour on feeling the hook, the diaries of Test fishermen would show much less imposing totals. It is on the whole fortunate that big fish in weedy waters are not given to acrobatics; otherwise they would seldom be landed with the little hooks and fine gut that dry-fly fishing makes necessary. It is not the trout that runs far and fast that is dangerous to the tackle, nor is the trout that dives into a weed-bed and stays there necessarily a lost fish; a gentle coaxing with the hand on the line itself will in most cases persuade him to come out again.

The really awkward opponent is the trout which goes off at a burst for six or seven yards, turns sharp to the left, going slap through a patch of weed, takes another burst straight up stream, turns to the right into more weeds, dashes out on the other side, and finally comes to anchor, having, for greater security, taken two turns with the gut round a convenient rush. This—with certain modifications according to circumstances—is the customary procedure of the trout here. They are greatly helped by the nature of the stream, since they need never travel far to find some device for giving the angler pain. It follows therefore that their capture, when they are hooked, is anything but a certainty, which adds of course enormously to the interest of the game. It may be said, in fact, that these

small fish are just as hard to land as their heavier brethren in bigger streams, and so are entitled to just as much respect.

If a man wants to make the most of the small fish in streams like this (for it is by no means the only one in the chalk-system) he can modify his tackle, or, at any rate, his rod. Nowadays the tacklemakers can fit you with miniature split-cane rods which might have been invented specially to match those miniature rivers, and the use of them certainly makes the fishing seem more important. Last season I took down, one day, a tiny rod of seven feet which weighs under three ounces. I intended to fish with it in a backwater which is so overhung with trees and so beset with bushes that a longer rod would not avail there. I found the toy to answer so well and to handle the fish so cunningly, that I afterwards took it to the more open water, and for the rest of the season used nothing else there. These tiny rods do not throw a long line of course, so they necessitate an extra amount of creeping and crawling in the approach of rising fish. As the dry-fly man ought to creep and crawl—it is part of the fun—that does not matter. A certain advantage is to be found in the delicacy with which such a rod responds to the movements of the fish; it may stop him from doing some of the more outrageous things that he has in his head, by making him think that his less elaborate devices are succeeding—till he finds, too late, that he has wasted his time and strength on futilities.

Expert dry-fly men generally counsel the novice to ‘bustle’ his fish, to be as hard on him as the tackle will allow, and to get him to the net as quickly as possible. This is sound enough for some occasions, but not for all. Sometimes a trout may be hooked in a place where his escape is an absolute certainty if he chooses to put out his strength and exercise his speed. A little, clear pool with tree-roots or trailing brambles at its sides is such a place. Unless the angler’s tackle is strong enough for a sheer pulling match, as it seldom is, his only chance is to play the trout as though the cast was made of cobweb, to yield to his every movement and humour his every whim. It is surprising how often and how quickly that treatment will bring the fish peacefully, and without fuss, to the net. With a small, light rod it is much easier to play a fish in this way than with a long, heavy one. The susceptibility of trout to gentle treatment shows that this violent behaviour is due as much to shock and sudden alarm as to the fact that they have been hooked. If you have struck quietly and kept the lightest

strain on afterwards, the fish seems to be hardly aware of anything wrong. If, however, you have struck hard and begun to pull hard, he becomes a violent opponent at once.

In one important feature our little chalk-stream differs from some of its peers—the difference is possibly more noticeable on this part of it than on others—and that is in the matter of fly, and the consequent rising of the fish. I should hardly like to say that fly was less plentiful, but it is certainly less concentrated. The time of the rise is not nearly so well defined as on the Itchen, for instance, and it is not often that you could lay your hand on your heart and say, ‘Why, every trout in the stream is on the feed.’ On the other hand, it is not often that you could say with gloomy certainty, ‘Not a blessed trout is moving anywhere.’ For nearly always there is something moving, or willing to move, somewhere, and you can get rises at any time of day if you are persistent and alert. You can catch fish, moreover, by speculative casting in likely places, a method which is of doubtful value on the Itchen in most parts that I know.

This freer habit of the trout is wholly commendable to busy men whose fishing days are few, for it means that fewer hours are absorbed in mere contemplation. The catch may not be more numerous in the end—an Itchen rise is often a busy and crowded time—but it will have been more evenly distributed over the day, and that counts in the balance of enjoyment.

Why, it may be asked, is there such a difference in the habits of trout in two rivers not many miles apart? Several explanations may be given with some confidence. One is that the little river is rather shallow and rapid, a character which makes for greater alertness in its inhabitants. Another is the fact that its trout are smaller. Half-pounders are everywhere easier to rouse than fish of twice or three times their weight. But most important, I think, is the character of the food-supply. This little stream is certainly richer in ‘oddments’ than a bigger one would be, or at any rate the oddments make a braver show and stimulate more fish. Plenty of beetles, caterpillars, crane flies, ants, and other irregular fare must reach the trout of a big river, but only as a rule those trout which lie close to the banks. In a narrow stream such as this, however, the fish which lie in the middle expect a share in the good things too, and no doubt get it. So the proportion of what may be called casual feeders is greater than in the bigger rivers, and the angler’s chances are accordingly more numerous.

Where all is delightful it is hard to declare a preference for one bit of the stream over another. Looking back on the days of last season I get a series of precious memories, from the first day when I hurried down the great field which slopes from the church to the ford (on a very hot day you can bear to the right and have the grateful shade of an avenue of elms for most of the distance), to the last day in September when I hastened uphill along the road from the top of the water, not without misgivings as to the time left for catching the last train.

Near the ford, which is practically at the middle of the water, is the choicest spot for luncheon that Nature ever devised. Five big trees—chestnut, elm, ash, oak, and beech—there combine to ward off the sun, and there the stream, always in the shade, babbles round three sharp corners with the impetuous fuss of a mountain brook. With a brace in the creel, or without it, an angler could never fail in that spot of a divine content. Hard-boiled eggs, a crisp lettuce, bread and butter, and a bottle of amber ale a-cool in the water at his feet—what could appetite want better in so smiling ‘a corner of the world’?

And (let me but whisper it) if by lunch-time the creel is quite empty, and if a fish or two are urgently required for some kindly purpose, and if last night the evening rise was all sound, sight, and fury, signifying nothing, and if—but the fisherman knows these if’s well enough to dispense with the list. Granting the if’s, there is the stream rippling along under the boughs and over the gravel, as it had been in Devonshire. What more natural than to respond to so obvious an invitation, and to see what a blue upright or Greenwell’s glory may achieve fished wet down-stream? A wrong proceeding, I grant you, yet not without the palliation of difficulty, for the rod must be kept low and the line switched cunningly to avoid the overhanging boughs. And the fly must hang seductively in the eddy behind the ash-roots, must move convincingly across the stream, and must be made to tarry here, to hasten there. There is more in the wet-fly business than contemptuous prohibitions would seem to allow, especially in a place like this. And when the tug comes, and a fierce half-pound fish is gone away down-stream and round the corner, the angler vows, puffing and splashing after, that never did trout hooked on orthodox dry-fly make so fast a run or pull so hard. It is the not impossible two-pounder at last!

It is well that two anglers should be on the fishery together, because there is then no difficulty as to which part of the water it

were best to visit. For two rods there is an obvious division into an upper beat and a lower. Alone, I sometimes knew fearful indecisions, and if, after much turning of the swift mind this way and that, I went up-stream, there would presently come a craving for the lower water. If my feet carried me to the bottom hatch where the boundary is, my heart would surely fly to the bridge right at the top where, close against the brickwork, would be rising that big one which I could always move and never catch. Positively to get full advantage of a very varied bit of fishing a man needs to be 'two gentlemen rolled into one,' but capable of unrolling at need.

If from the luncheon corner one goes up, one comes to the water which is perhaps most typical of a dry-fly stream, and the higher one goes the more tempting does it become. There are two little weirs, three bridges, and several stretches with a steady and smooth current where rises and flies can be easily seen. A good deal of the lower water is too swift and broken for comfort of vision, and frequently one has to guess at the exact position of one's fly. Even keen-sighted and experienced anglers probably have to do this more often than the beginner suspects, but they are never quite happy about it. It leads sometimes to distressing incidents. I shall never forget a vast Test trout which on a very windy day took my fly four several times. My eyes on each occasion were earnestly fixed on a natural fly which floated hard by the artificial, and on each occasion I found out the mistake just too late. A brisk ripple on the water made spotting the right fly a matter of sheer luck.

There are several very difficult bits on this upper water. In two or three places a willow leans across the stream, and under each is a deep hole with an eddy behind the trunk. Practically the trout in these strongholds are not to be caught. Occasionally one may be hooked by the arduous process of dibbling through the network of twigs, or by casting a very short line just over the tree-trunk up-stream. But an immediate retreat to the shelter of the roots very soon frees that trout, and probably teaches his fellows wisdom; at any rate, it is quite a rare thing even to get a fish on in these places.

Another difficult place is a delightful glide under some bushes on the far bank. The bed of the stream shelves gently here so that the water is only an inch or two in depth on this side and perhaps two or three feet on the other. For some reason connected with the light it seems almost impossible to get a fly to any rising fish in

this piece without alarming him. No matter whether you crawl close to the edge or grovel out in the meadow, something—your head, your arm, the flash of the rod, or the curving line—is perceived by the trout, and he withdraws as quickly as may be. None the less the angler will certainly waste a lot of time here, because the place is so tempting to his eye.

For the sake of the basket it were wiser to go on a few hundred yards to a part of the stream which is somewhat deeper and formed into a succession of little runs and pools by beds of weeds. Here the trout are not easily scared, and when the fly is hatching they rise very freely, half a dozen or so in each pool and two or three in each run. At the first sight the angler says to himself, 'Ha ! they are delivered into my hand,' and probably forms a resolution not to take too many. So simple and confiding a folk deserves chivalrous treatment. But when he has been pegging away for half an hour or so with no result but a few short and splashy rises his mind is altered. He desires, and desires very badly, to knock one or two of these fish on the head. The trouble here is what is called 'drag.' Owing to the irregular growth of weeds the current varies in pace with every few inches, and the result is that the fly is made to do all sorts of unnatural things. The drag *can* be overcome by very careful use of slack-line, but only after much study and experiment. One learns to regard a brace of fish caught in this reach as a solid and satisfactory hour's work.

It is not so very far from this point to the road bridge, which may be called the top of the water. Having attained to this, the angler commonly begins to think of tea, and of the little low-browed inn which may be reached in five minutes, or perhaps a little more, since the road winds up-hill, and waders and brogues make slow going. First, though, he must spread his elbows comfortably on the parapet and gaze into the deep pool below. Let me here tell the story of the great fish. It was 'no fisher but a well-wisher to the game' (in Sir Walter Scott's phrase) who discovered the great fish, and who made, so to say, no small song about it, for it was creditable in a well-wisher to have detected a monster which the fishers had completely overlooked. So long it was (hands two feet apart), and it lay just to the right of the strongest stream, in the very deepest part of the pool. The fishers, much perturbed, at once set out to test the matter, for a two-foot trout is a six-pounder at the least. Sure enough there in the spot mentioned was a shape, broad and dark and obscure by reason of what Blackmore

might have called the 'nebules' in the water. 'Golly' and 'Great Scott,' said the fishers, and they went away.

But at dusk for several evenings a stealthy figure would approach the pool from below, there would be a swishing in the air, and presently a sort of plop, as a sedge suitable to six-pounders hurtled on to the surface of the water. Nothing came of it, but every morning there was the dark form in its accustomed place to inspire new stratagems and provoke fresh efforts. Then at last came a morning of bright sun and unusually low water—a mill above was perhaps holding the stream up for an hour or two. And the murder (it might almost be called that) was out. A child's toy boat lay waterlogged and derelict on the river-bed. Its lines were not at all unlike those of broad-backed trout, and a straggle of weed made a very passable tail. It was immediately evident that precious evenings had been wasted, and there was a sudden transference of affection from the upper to the lower water, where men were not mocked by *simulacra*.

For beauty the lower water could not compare with the upper, being almost destitute of trees, and open to sun and wind. But for interest it might be held superior. The main stream is somewhat swifter, rather deeper, a little narrower. Its fish are, maybe, a ounce or two heavier as a rule, and perhaps rather better fed. One remarkable trout, caught almost at the boundary, weighed a pound though it was only twelve inches long, an exceptionally deep, fat fish.

To me, however, the interest of the lower water lies not only in the main stream. Here the meadows are kept pretty constantly irrigated, 'under water' as it is somewhat largely termed, and the result is that there are many carriers and side streams cris-crossed about. In most of these you may find trout, often bigger trout than are commonly to be caught in the river itself. The older fish of all chalk-streams seem to have a tendency to wander into the irrigation channels, where no doubt they get very good feeding of minnows, slugs, beetles, and other sustaining things. To me there is something very fascinating about these outliers, and fishing the carriers is a joy. These carriers are the more amusing because they are so tiny. Getting a three-quarter-pound trout out of a runnel two feet wide and eighteen inches deep is the queerest adventure. It is not orthodox fishing as a rule, for the fish seldom rise—there is no hatch of fly to speak of. But deft casting in the likely spots will often fetch up a fish whose existence was only hypothetical.

One day in one of these carriers I saw what looked like a dimple under a dockleaf. I put a ginger quill on the place, had an immediate rise, and then for about five minutes walked solemnly up and down in attendance on the biggest trout I ever hooked on the fishery. He never hurried himself, but cruised to and fro, and in the end the fly came away just as I was wondering whether it would be a matter for the taxidermist. I think that trout was a two-pounder, though, of course, estimates of lost fish are suspect by general consent, and it does not do to be rash. Anyhow, I can say without hesitation that I was filled with two pounds' worth of grief.

One of the two biggest fish I caught during the season was the result of long-continued efforts on what is known as the backwater—in reality a little side-stream which joins the river near the ford. Near the point of junction it is quite considerable, though almost without current. Here big trees shade it from the sun nearly all day, tall rushes grow along the bank, and the trout cruise about in droves lazily sucking in gnats, spinners, and other trifles, and occasionally splashing at the sedges which are tempted out by the subdued light. There are a couple of hundred yards of this still water, and one can easily spend a morning here peeping through the rushes and occasionally dropping a fly in front of a fish which comes within reach—they patrol the place like peaceful pickets. On a very hot day this waiting game is to be commended, and a brace of trout may be caught without too much hard labour.

Ordinarily the fish are no bigger than those elsewhere in the fishery, but one day I became aware of a mighty one which smacked great jaws as he fed, and made great commotions as he moved about. Presently I saw him, and he had fifteen or sixteen inches to his credit. And then I rose him and hooked him; the water heaved as he rolled over, and the fly came away. For several week-ends I pursued that fish in vain. He was sometimes in one place, sometimes in another. Occasionally he would make a pretence of rising, but he would never really take a fly again till a day nearly at the end of July, when I overcame his caution by a trick which was probably very wrong. I put on a fly with a long straggling hookle and placed it before him. He came, looked, mocked, and went away. I withdrew the fly and waited for some minutes till he returned on his beat. Then I cast it in front of him, and as he came to look again twitched the point of the rod ever so slightly. The fly waggled on the water, the fish perceived that here was something

which had life and movement, opened his mouth wide, closed it—and in due course weighed one pound three ounces. Without prejudice, he should have weighed a pound and a half.

Higher up, the backwater gets smaller and smaller till at last it has no obvious existence at all. Its course is absolutely choked with coarse rushes and other vegetation, and most of the little pools are screened with impenetrable bushes and protected by drooping boughs. Yet in some of the clear spots there are trout, and good ones. I used occasionally to get one here and there at the expense of scratches from thorns, stings from nettles, an aching back, and very undignified attitudes.

It was not bad fun, but it was laborious, so one day early in June I decided to make the place fishable, and put in some perspiring hours with a billhook, a saw, and an iron rake. By tea-time there was a real improvement visible, and for nearly half a mile the stream was approachable at regular intervals. Alas, for human aspirations! A month later when I inspected the water things were worse than ever. I could not get a fly on to it anywhere. The nettles, rushes, bushes, and trees had acquired so mighty an impetus from my pruning that they had combined to choke the little stream altogether. Perhaps it was not the pruning, but the power of growth which is natural in the valley of a chalk-stream.

I do not resent my defeat by incensed Nature. The experience in retrospect is even pleasant, for it blends with the other impressions given by a season on a Hampshire river, all of them testifying to the wonder and beauty of life. Nowhere in England could one get impressions more varied or more vivid. The plovers which made a routine business of trying to persuade one to leave the lower meadow, where they had family affairs; the little company of stoats which one day played like kittens round a broken hatch board; the tiny dabchick which had just left its shell, and seemed in danger of drowning till a landing-net rescued it, and helped it to a patch of weeds; the friendly carthorses and placid cows—all these things combine with the flowers, bees, butterflies, and other lesser creatures to make up a rich feast for memory.

Fair sights, sweet sounds, the scent of may or meadowsweet, and a clear river rippling in golden sunshine—has life anything better to give?

H. T. SHERINGHAM.

### THE WAY OF THE LEGION.

FOR me, the whole world—my sight, my life, every energy of my being—was centred on the slight crease in Duroc's shirt, just a little above the hip, where the deep chest arched downwards to the waist.

Then, as the interminable seconds dragged on, I became conscious that I was listening, listening intently, for the 'One! Two! Three!'—the simple, deadly signal that was to sound the knell of one life—mine—perchance of two.

A light air trembled across the glade with a sense of sound on its wings. I felt—I knew, that some one was about to speak. My hand tightened on my pistol-butt, my eyes riveted themselves with fiercer attention on the crease.

'Well, gentlemen!'

The voice was unrefined, uncultivated, yet commanding, and withal full of quiet dignity. I saw a dark red flush spread upwards over the tan of Duroc's face, and slowly recede. His hand was hanging empty and nerveless by his side. His pistol had fallen to the ground.

I turned my eyes from him to the direction from which the voice came, and my heart quailed as I saw what I knew I must see, the face of Lefèbre.

I confess it! My heart quailed. I have faced time and again the prospect of battle, not only without apprehension, but with elation. I have charged with exultation in the teeth of a storm of bullets, but the prospect of being shot like a dog and buried like a dog chilled me to the blood in my veins.

There had been duels, a score and more, in our heterogeneous army, between us true Frenchmen and our conscript allies, and so embittered had our feelings become as seriously to endanger the discipline and cohesion of the troops in the field. Two days previously Lefèbre had published a General Order to the effect that, in the event of another duel, not only the principals, but all connected with it, were to be shot out of hand on conviction by drum-head court-martial, and Lefèbre was the man to see the order executed to the letter.

Before a court-martial we might have had a chance—our judges would have been in sympathy with us; but here we were, caught

and convicted by the General himself, a stern man at all times, and now, as our sinking hearts told us, all his natural hardness made savage by his reverses at the hands of the Tyrolese.

Presently he spoke again.

'And so, gentlemen, this is how you fight the enemies of the Emperor ! This is how you obey my orders !' He paused a moment, and then, as no one spoke, commanded : 'Follow me !'

And without another glance he turned and walked slowly away, with bent head, in the direction of the camp.

We were six men, all, except the surgeon, with weapons ready to our hands, six men going to our death, and the General, sole witness and judge, was walking, his back towards us, within ten paces of the nearest, unarmed save for a riding-whip. No one else was at hand, the trees around the glade were thick, the camp was distant : one bullet—the stray shot of a Tyrolese rifleman would account for it—and six lives would be saved at the cost of one. Yet we followed him, in the bright morning sunlight, through the valley of the shadow without one of us lifting a hand.

We walked on in gloomy silence till the trees grew thinner, and the hum of the camp more distinct. All at once the General turned on us, and there was a not unkindly smile on his lips.

'Well,' he said, in his abrupt manner, 'so none of you have thought of putting a bullet into me ?'

I felt the blood rush to my face, and I cast a glance at Duroc. He was scarlet. Lefèbre smiled again and his eyes softened.

'Well, well, well ! You have, then ! And yet you would not take your General's life to save your own. Ah, well ! you are gallant gentlemen !'

He paused, and his brow darkened. For a moment and more he stood impatiently striking his boot with his whip ; then—'Come, Major le Boulard,' he said sharply. 'You were to have given the signal. Tell me all about this affair. You have been concerned in most of the recent duels, I hear !'

Le Boulard endeavoured to steady his shaking limbs and trembling voice.

'Not as principal, General,' he began.

'I know that,' snapped Lefèbre, scornfully. Le Boulard was a coward, and a carrion bird—one who delighted to arrange duels, ay, and to bring them about. It was, perhaps, fortunate for our commander that fear had deprived Le Boulard of the recollection that he carried a pistol.

'Well, General,' he resumed, 'it was only yesterday morning, when the attack on that hill on the left flank failed and a retrograde movement became necessary—'

'When we were beaten and had to run,' interrupted Lefèbre, sternly. 'Go on.'

Le Boulard was disconcerted. He lived on flattery, and could not understand.

'When we were beaten, and had to run,' he continued, nervously. 'It would seem that M. Leval here' (indicating me) 'was first out of reach of the Tyrolese bullets, and that M. Duroc made some remarks on the subject which gave offence to M. Leval.'

'That is not quite fair, General,' interposed Duroc. 'Major le Boulard has omitted to say that M. Leval is a native of the south, where the country is mountainous, and that consequently he can run on ground where I could only scramble.'

I looked at Duroc in pleased surprise. This was the man who had called me coward.

'We were heated and disappointed, and angry at defeat,' resumed Duroc, 'and we quarrelled. That is all.'

'Why, that is very well said,' exclaimed the General, 'and it should be all. What say you, M. Leval ?'

My impulse was to stretch out my hand to Duroc, but, as I moved, I surprised a sneer on Le Boulard's lips. I knew well that he would devise some venomous story, discreditable to me, unless I protected myself, and then shelter himself from the consequences behind the General Order.

'Indeed, yes,' I said heartily, 'only as M. Duroc made his accusation of cowardice before the officers of the regiment, I am sure he will have no hesitation in withdrawing it in their presence. Then I shall be more than satisfied.'

I spoke with an honest desire for reconciliation, but Duroc misinterpreted my meaning. The generous impulse of his heart was chilled, and his hot temper took fire on the moment.

'And in reply,' he said, 'M. Leval was good enough to strike me'—he touched a slight discoloration on his cheek. 'If, when I have withdrawn the charge of cowardice, he will allow me to place a similar mark on his face in the presence of our mess, I shall be more than satisfied.'

Lefèbre turned on him like a lion. Then, mastering himself with that iron will of his, so steadfast under trial, he spoke, and his voice was gentler than usual.

'Why, that is very ill said, M. Duroc. And now I am going to ask you three questions. Supposing that you had been as skilled a mountaineer as M. Leval, would you have lingered behind, or would you not have been side by side with him ?'

Duroc hung his head.

'And, of course, you were the challenged party, and had the choice of weapons ?'

Duroc's eyes flashed, but he contented himself with bowing. His face was very white.

'Then does it not seem to you rather strange,' continued the General, in the same even voice, 'that one who has the reputation of being the best pistol-shot in the army and who selected pistols should be so glib with a charge of cowardice ?'

'Your pardon, General,' I interrupted hastily, 'that question was brought up by M. Duroc himself. Unfortunately, my repute as a swordsman is scarcely inferior to his as a shot. Eventually the matter of weapons was settled by cutting cards.'

Lefèbre smiled, well pleased.

'Brave boys ! Brave boys !' he said, and laughed as he spoke ; then continued musingly : 'After all, there has been no actual duel, and you might have taken my life and did not. Yes, yes. You shall have a chance, though, mind, only a bare chance.'

He stopped, and commenced tapping his boot again.

'Yes,' he resumed, 'that will do. I shall call for volunteers for a forlorn hope to-day, and shall require a leader—'

I made an eager movement, and Duroc and our seconds stepped forward simultaneously. Lefèbre checked us with his hand.

'Nay,' he said, 'that honour,' and there was grating sarcasm in his voice, 'shall be the senior officer's. Major le Boulard, you will proceed to my quarters and await me there.'

The Major saluted with an ashen face. The General had spoken his death-warrant, and they both knew it.

'For you,' continued Lefèbre, as soon as the Major was out of earshot—'for you who are seconds, and you, doctor, this time you go free, but take care, take care !—for the next time I will make you as that man, without even the chance he has. Now go !'

In a few seconds we were alone with the General. He turned from watching the others, and his expression was almost kindly.

'As for you young fire-eaters, I suppose you will be at each other's throats as soon as my back is turned ; if not to-day, to-morrow or next day ? I thought so.' He had read our faces.

'Well, you shall have your wish, and a chance—a bare chance of your lives.'

He folded his arms and looked upwards with a singular smile on his lips—upwards over our heads, over the dark pine-trees, up to where the gaunt dolomite crags were peering through the morning mists.

'La Bayonnette,' he muttered. 'Yes! That will do! My orders will be brought to you within an hour. You will await them at your mess-tent. You are the senior officer, I think, M. Leval?'

With a curt gesture he dismissed us, and turned away. We watched him till he was out of sight. Duroc touched my arm.

'Well,' he said, and there was no trace of anger or even ill-feeling in his voice, 'shall we settle now? There are no seconds, it is true—'

I shook my head.

'No,' I replied. 'Not that it makes much difference to me, but you would be hanged for a certainty, and, personally, I should prefer to be shot.'

'That's true,' grumbled Duroc. 'You're a good fellow, Leval. It is a pity we can't make this up?' He looked at me inquiringly. He knew the answer I must give.

It was singular, that situation. We had set out, he and I, that morning, intent on taking each other's lives; we were bound to meet, for the same savage purpose, by the foolish fear of being thought afraid; a sword was hanging over our heads compared with which that of Damocles, judging from the sentence passed on Le Boulard, would have been security; yet we walked back with the friendliest feelings for each other in our hearts, speculating lightly on the hazard before us.

'I wonder,' said Duroc, looking up over his shoulder at the mountains, 'what the deuce he meant by La Bayonnette.'

I could not conjecture. La Bayonnette, we knew well enough—it had been a thorn in our side these ten days past, a curtain of rock, falling almost sheer on either side, and tapering away to a knife-edge at the summit. It had been christened 'La Bayonnette' by the soldiers, from a prominent pinnacle that protruded from the jagged summit.

It was not, however, its fantastic appearance, but its strategical value that had gained La Bayonnette its notoriety. It connected two sheer dolomite mountains, inaccessible for our troops, but not, unfortunately, for Tyrolean chamois-hunters; and on the other side,

it was known, lay a deep valley where the enemy camped, unassailable. It was felt that if the ridge could be crossed, or even occupied, their position would be turned and another step forward accomplished in the formidable task Napoleon had set his lieutenant.

More than one daring party had made the attempt and abandoned it as impracticable, not without loss of life. Two brave fellows had slipped, and been dashed to pieces on the broken rocks hundreds of feet below ; and ever as the baffled survivors retreated there would come from dizzy eyries on the cliffs above little puffs of smoke, the harbingers of death. A French soldier was all too easy a mark for men who could hit running chamois.

The camp was barely astir when we returned—we had set out for our meeting at break of dawn—and the mess-tent was empty, to our relief, as we were thereby saved embarrassing questions. We collected such breakfast as we might, with the aid of a sleepy mess-sergeant.

'I will undertake,' remarked Duroc, as we settled ourselves to our meal, 'that the General has not been in bed. He has something on hand.'

'Yes. And we have been made part of that something,' I assented ; and from that moment no word was interchanged. We were both thinking.

In less than half an hour, an orderly arrived with a message for me.

I took Duroc by the arm, and we read it together.

'On receipt of this, you and M. Duroc will proceed to opposite ends of La Bayonnette, which you will at once endeavour to cross. The selection of the points of starting you will arrange between yourselves. You will both take with you the pistols you had this morning. Thus your mountaineering ability should equalise M. Duroc's skill as a pistol-shot, and *vice versa*. You may also be able to satisfy your conceptions of honour. You will each be accompanied by an escort of the Fifth Tirailleurs, whom you will find waiting. The escorts will remain within easy range of either extremity of La Bayonnette, under cover, and as far as possible in safety. In the event of either you or M. Duroc attempting to return by the end of La Bayonnette from which you set out, the escort have orders to shoot you down.'

Duroc took the paper from my hand, and read it again, word by word. Then once again. Then he laughed, very bitterly.

'There are more ways of killing a dog than hanging,' he com-

mented. 'He knows I shall break my neck for a certainty on those infernal rocks.'

'Nonsense,' I replied, angrily. I was so irritated by the sarcasm of the letter, of the implicit rebuke, that the hopelessness of the bare chance promised escaped me. 'Nonsense! All you need do is to wait quietly somewhere near your end of the ridge, and then, as soon as I am within range—if—I broke off dubiously—'I ever get so far.'

'With the subsequent alternative of going forward to certain death, or going back and being shot on sight by my own escort.'

His temper flashed out and mine responded, touched by fire. The mess-sergeant stepped forward to interpose. Then the grisly humour of the situation broke in on me.

'Anyhow,' I laughed, 'as the chances are we shall be picked off by those Tyrolese rats before we have gone a hundred feet, why should we quarrel?'

The anger left Duroc's face. He paused, looking down and frowning, one hand on his sword-hilt, the other laid hard on his mouth.

'Yes, yes,' he said, after a while, 'it is so. It must be so. Just as we both thought. Lefèbre is planning some *coup*, some *coup de théâtre*, and we are the dress rehearsal. Don't you see, man, that he wants to ascertain whether La Bayonnette is militarily practicable—and we—we are to ring up the curtain!'

'Yes,' I assented. 'But admitting all that,' I hesitated, 'even admitting that, I suppose that when we meet—if we meet, we must fire?'

'I suppose we must,' he replied reluctantly. 'And now it only remains for us to select our positions. What shall it be? Cards?'

I nodded. The mess-sergeant brought a pack.

'Highest takes the left, lowest the right?' I asked.

'So be it.'

I cut a seven, Duroc a three, and without further word we left the tent.

On either side of the entrance were standing a corporal and a file of men. The corporals, with a salute, repeated their orders to Duroc and myself. Their purport was identical with that of the General's note, with the significant addition that the escort was forbidden to address, answer, or hold any communication whatsoever with the officer under its charge. Duroc shrugged his shoulders.

We set out at a rapid pace. Duroc was silent, save for an

occasional exclamation of dissatisfaction. From time to time I glanced back at the escorts, old soldiers all. They were swinging along as nonchalantly as if the fact that before many hours had passed they might become our executioners, or that their station was to be within perilous range of the deadly Tyrolese rifles, was of no moment.

For me, I found myself thinking of anything but the business in hand—and wondering at doing so.

At length we came to the parting of the ways. The station that had fallen to me, though more remote from the camp, was nearer to where we stood and easier of access. I turned to Duroc and suggested that we should exchange positions. He did not heed me. He was looking back towards the camp.

'I told you so,' he said. 'I knew there was something in the wind. Do you see those men, straggling out in ones and twos and threes? They are coming our way, and they mean something. I beg your pardon,' he broke off, 'you were saying—?'

I repeated my proposal. Duroc looked at me with a puzzled frown, and then cast his eyes up in the direction of La Bayonnette and scrutinised the mountain-side. As he did so, his expression changed.

'You are a good fellow,' he said, 'but I could not think of it. I quite see what you mean, but—well, the fortune of war, you know!'

I argued and expostulated, but he was obstinate. At length I said, more for the sake of arguing than convincing:

'But you must remember, Duroc, that it is the General's wish that our chances should be as equal as possible, and my position gives me an undue advantage.'

To my surprise, he withdrew his opposition at once. He was a soldier to the tips of his fingers—obedience was a religion to him, and, moreover, he adored Lefèbre.

'All the same,' he ended, 'you have paralysed my aim. I don't see how I can shoot to hit now.'

'Time enough to talk about that when we meet,' I returned, rather grimly. '*Au revoir.*'

We shook hands and went our ways. I proceeded leisurely. Silence was of more importance than speed. I had no intention of advertising my approach to any lurking Tyrolese. The escort followed with similar deliberation. They were from the Vosges, and not unaccustomed to mountains.

As I toiled upwards, with eyes scanning La Bayonnette, I

noticed its sharp jagged outlines become first mellowed, then indistinct, till the whole savage ridge was shrouded in a graceful drapery of mist. I welcomed the friendly vapour. Its gauzy veil would afford a safe covering from the eyes of the enemy's sharp-shooters. Moreover, and this thought was dominant in my mind, it would deaden, for Duroc, the perilous fascination of the dizzy call of death. The safety of the man whose life I had sought that morning was my chiefest anxiety.

Just where the mist thinned away into the bright air, and close to the commencement of La Bayonnette, I came on a delicious spring, framed in a setting of tender verdure and harsh boulders. Here I rested whilst the escort settled themselves against the hour of my return. Then, once again, I started cautiously upwards.

A few minutes brought me to the verge of the chasm bridged by La Bayonnette. Here, to my surprise—for the mountain-side had been breathless—I found a smart breeze blowing. I cursed it impatiently, for it added seriously to the perils of crossing the ridge; yet to it I unquestionably owed my life.

Below, above, around me was mist, dancing, changing, swirling, thickening, clearing, under the sway of the blast. Before me, almost from my feet, sprang outward the formidable crags of La Bayonnette. I braced my nerves and started on the traverse.

My journey was well-nigh over ere I had fairly started. The hilt of my sabre, catching in a projection of rock, pulled me suddenly back, and, in attempting to recover myself, the smooth leather soles of my boots slipped on the wet greasy limestone. It was only by a desperate clutch of my hands that I saved myself.

Very cautiously, with the cold perspiration running down my face, I slid back to safety, and unbuckled—my hands shook so that I twice failed—my sword-belt. Just as I was laying my weapon aside, I heard the grating sound of a nailed boot close at hand, and a voice speaking impatiently in German. The next moment a Tyrolean sharp-shooter stepped out of the mist.

Like a flash his rifle was at his shoulder, and simultaneously I thrust at him with all my might. The metal point of my scabbard—I had no time to draw the blade—took him full in the face, and, dropping his piece, he reeled backwards and disappeared. Then from far below came a dull thud, followed by a crash of falling stones, then another, then silence, save for the hooting of the wind, the friendly wind that had concealed the sound of my approach.

For a long time, a minute or even more, I stood stone-still, combating the craven instinct to escape by stealing back round the escort and re-joining, with a lie to the General that I had traversed La Bayonnette. The temptation passed and left me the stronger for its coming, and I steadied myself for the task before me.

I laid my sword aside. Then I slipped off my tunic, my shako, and my boots, and, with my pistols fastened behind me, addressed myself once more to La Bayonnette.

To my surprise, I now found the crags, that had been so desperately perilous, relatively safe. The magnesian limestone had weathered into innumerable little ledges, projections, and pockets, affording adequate hold for my stockinginged feet where my boots would have slipped hopelessly. Moreover, resting-places on broad slabs or in deep fissures occurred at frequent intervals, so that I was enabled to make progress steadily, even rapidly, and with little fatigue. The only real trouble was the wind.

Pinnacle after pinnacle, cleft after cleft, I passed. All feeling of fear, even of doubt, had vanished; my chief sensation was triumphant exhilaration that I was conquering the unconquerable. I had forgotten all about Duroc.

At length I reached La Bayonnette itself. Up from the ridge it sprang, full sixty feet, like a gigantic rusted spear-blade with edges all notched and broken, and tapering to a jagged point.

Formidable though its appearance was, it was perhaps the most easily surmountable of all the obstacles I had encountered. On the summit I rested awhile, and then for the first time I noticed that, though the mist still lay thick and heavy in the chasm between the mountains, it had thinned away almost to nothingness in the direction of the camp. Dimly I could discern the sparkle of arms and catch the distant murmur of a stirring multitude.

The hope fired up in my mind that I might yet take my place in the battle-line. Below me, on the far side, the pinnacle was gashed by a deep fissure, and down this I worked my way with cautious speed.

Some ten feet above the base of La Bayonnette the cleft ended in a broad recess, from which a slab of rock dropped, almost sheer to the main ridge. I craned my head over the edge to trace out a way down, and there, right below me, was Duroc. I could have put my pistol within two feet of his head and blown his brains out.

His face was ashen; his whole body was trembling. Now and

again he would steal a glance downwards to the ghastly depths the thinning mist had revealed, and then close them with a spasm. He was clinging hard to the crags, moving neither forward nor back. I dared not speak, lest my voice should startle him; so we both remained for some seconds motionless. Then, with indomitable resolution, he braced himself to the ascent of La Bayonnette.

All my triumphant pride was abashed at the sight. What was my courage to that of this man? How he had won so far, encumbered by his boots, hampered with his sword, handicapped by inexperience, tortured by dizziness, I could not guess. I could only wonder and admire.

Presently one strong brown hand and then another grasped the edge of the ledge where I was kneeling, and Duroc commenced to drag himself up. But the effort was too great. I saw the sinews stand out and swell, and then slacken. I heard him groan.

In an instant I had him firmly gripped by the wrist.

'If you go, we go together,' I said.

For a few seconds the strain was terrific. Then Duroc found a slight purchase for one foot, and a quarter of a minute later he was panting on the floor of the recess.

He began to find voice—to thank me, but I cut him short by telling him what I had seen from the summit of La Bayonnette. He was alert in a moment.

'You must go back at once,' he cried. 'Your end of the ridge is the nearest way. Never mind me. What, man! do you think I would keep you from the fight? Go back!'

'Indeed, I will do nothing of the sort,' I retorted; and then, as I noticed the obstinate setting of his lips, a happy argument came. 'Besides, comrade, I shall need you to make a truce with my escort.'

'True,' he assented, 'I had forgotten that. Forward, then!'

Upon the words, the thunder of artillery crashed on our ears and re-echoed in shattering reverberations from the crags. The battle had begun.

Reckless of danger, we swung ourselves upwards till we reached the summit of La Bayonnette. From there we looked down on a magnificent spectacle. On our left all was still clouds and thick darkness; right in front the Bayonnette ridge fell away in ragged notch upon notch to a broad chaos of boulders, which formed one bastion of a deep gorge. We could look partially down into the

gorge itself, the impregnable gateway to the mountains from which we had been bloodily repulsed but yesterday, and over the whole array of beetling crags that formed its further wall. But it was the scene on the right that caught and held my attention.

The whole of the country between the base of the crags and the camp was dark with our men, advancing in skirmishing order, apparently loosely, yet ready for immediate concentration, with the cavalry in observation beyond ; the sombre pine-wood where Duroc and I had stood face to face was bright with the glitter of steel ; and further away, opposite the opening of the ravine, grey wreaths of sulphurous mist sprang into thunderous being and canopied the earth. There the artillery, taking ground grandly by batteries, was closing in on the portal of the mountains, searching its black recesses with the tempest of iron, so that no living creature might stay therein and live. There, too, in the forefront of the fray, as was his wont, was Lefèbre.

It was a sight to stir the blood as with the call of a bugle. I turned enthusiastically to Duroc, but there was that in his face that struck the words from my lips. He was not looking at the French, he was staring out straight ahead. His head was craned forward, his lips were contracted so that his mouth showed only as a thin line ; his nostrils were distended and transparent ; his brows were bent so that one could scarcely see his eyes, which glowed with feverish intensity. I caught his arm.

He turned to me, and I could feel him tremble.

'Look !' he exclaimed, in tones of horror—'look, Leval, it is a death-trap, and '—his voice shook—'we shall be too late.'

Steadying himself with one hand, he pointed with the other. I half knew what I should see before my eyes confirmed the apprehensions of my brain. Along the further edge of the gorge, invisible from the plain, unscathed by the storm of shot, were posted scores of Tyrolese, rifle in hand. Ay, but even the withering accuracy of their fire would not stay, would not check, the onrush of the French. No ! No ! But it was not the hand of Nature that had set those boulders on the verge of the chasm, it was not the hand of Nature that had balanced those tree-trunks, backed by masses of earth and piles of stone. Let the ravine be won, and one ordered touch would send an avalanche of destruction into its depths, crushing those below into death or tortured existence, cutting off the advanced troops for the hopeless mercies of the Tyrolese, and beating back the eagles with stained crest and shattered wing.

Duroc groaned as he watched my eyes.

'We shall be too late,' he repeated.

'Not if I can help it,' I cried, and swung myself down the dizzy edge of La Bayonnette. It had been my resolve to stay by my comrade; but what was the life of one man to the safety of our army, of our General, to the honour of France? Yet I hesitated.

Duroc understood; the air was electric.

'Forward!' he cried; and his voice rose shrill and piercing above the yelling of the wind. 'Never heed me! I'll follow after!'

Follow after! Throughout all that desperate passage he pressed me hard. Buffeted by the gale, swinging by our hands where there was no foothold, battling, agonising, with death yawning beneath us at every step, we forced our perilous way, till, where the rocks commenced to broaden, we cast ourselves down panting and exhausted.

Duroc was the first to struggle to his feet; something clattered on the stones beside him. It was the hilt of the sabre I had left. We were on the very spot where I had slain the enemy's outpost.

In an instant I was on my feet beside Duroc. I put my mouth close to his ear.

'Go on,' I whispered, 'but keep low, crawl—there may be Tyrolese about—and warn the picket.'

He nodded and drew his boots—by my advice he had slung them round his neck—over his torn feet. His sword was gone.

I was eagerly, yet very wearily, preparing to follow, when a harsh voice challenged from over my head. I looked up. A Tyrolean was standing on the very boulder against which I was lying, looking keenly in the direction Duroc had taken. For full five minutes he waited thus, then turned away with a grunt.

But as he turned he shouted some words down the ridge behind me.

I did not wait. I took my bare sabre by the blade and crept away. Just before I reached the spring where I had left the escort I came in sight of Duroc, and even as I saw him he stood on his feet and came to the salute.

The escort were there—where I had left them. One of the men was sitting with his head between his knees—and the back of his skull blown in. The other was lying, a huddled heap, at his feet. Close to him, on his back, was the corporal, a thin stream of blood trickling from his grey lips. As we bent over him he opened his eyes.

'The Tyrolean rats stalked us,' he whispered; 'we had no chance of—'

His voice failed, and with a tremor he passed away into the silence.

For us there was no respite for anger or pity. Duroc was already turning down the mountain-side, when I caught his arm.

'It's too late that way,' I said, 'but we may do something yet. Come with me!'

'What to do?'

'Fire on our own men!'

[He understood at once. Snatching up the muskets of the escort, we hurried stealthily to the edge of the ravine.

Right below us were our infantry, forming in column, with Lefèbre on his charger facing them, sword in hand. So close were they that we could discern the fierce eagerness of their bearing, and on the sight we knew that our three shots—all we could fire: the Tyrolese had taken the escort's cartridge-boxes—would not check for an instant those straining war-dogs. Duroc brought a musket to his shoulder, sighted it, then put it down with an exclamation of disgust.

'Oh, if only I had one of those infernal Tyrolese rifles!' he groaned.

'A rifle! Wait!' I whispered, and doubled back to the foot of the Bayonnette ridge. At the verge of the curtain of mist that still hung there, changeless and ever changing, were voices, fierce, eager voices, ever more audible; yet I pressed on—for the rifle.

It was lying where it had fallen, dropped from the hand of the man I had thrust to his death. It was at Duroc's shoulder within three minutes of my leaving him. Below, Lefèbre had wheeled his charger's head and was pointing with his hat up the gorge.

Crack! close to my ear. The great charger plunged forward and then they came to the ground together, General and steed. Duroc turned to me with a satisfied smile.

'Not a bad shot,' he said quietly.

I scarcely heard him. Inspiration came to me. I sprang to the verge of the cliff and waved the French back. I saw a stir of metal along the opposite brow of the gorge, and the next moment Duroc had snatched me by the belt and dragged me violently down.

'Do you want to be killed?' he began. His words were cut short by the crash of a volley, and from the Tyrolese ambush came a rain of bullets, whistling over us and smacking against the rocks all round.

'We shall be killed anyhow,' I replied grimly, 'but the General knows the whole danger now.'

'Why "killed anyhow" ?'

'There are Tyrolese enough and to spare for our business close at hand. I heard them when I fetched the rifle. Hark ! They are after us already.'

The firing from across the ravine had ceased, and now, from behind us, we could hear the crunching of boots and men's voices speaking eagerly. We wriggled round and lay facing the sounds, musket in hand. I took off my pistols and laid them beside me ; Duroc did the same.

For a few anxious seconds we waited. Then, seemingly from beneath our feet, came a rending detonation, followed almost instantly by a tremendous repercussion, which died away into a grating roar.

We looked over our shoulders. All along the far cliffs of the ravine the great boulders, the lashed tree-trunks, the piles of stones, ay, and even the bodies of the gallant defenders, were hurtling down into the gorge. Every battery, every piece, had been brought to bear on the enemy's ambuscade, and had swept it to destruction. The next moment a bullet from behind cut in between my ear and the ground, and splashed my face with the burning lead. The guardians of La Bayonnette had sighted us.

We whipped round in a moment. They were close at hand, half a score of them, with rifles at the ready. Duroc and I fired together and two of the enemy fell. Then a lash of white-hot fire scored my back from neck to hip. Simultaneously the third musket dropped from Duroc's hand, undischarged—he was hit in the left shoulder.

Duroc laughed. 'Your pistols, Leval,' he said quickly. 'Here they come, the fools, unloaded.'

They were coming, waving their empty rifles over their heads, with eyes glaring and teeth bared, like wolves hurling themselves on their prey. And, all the time, I was conscious of a wild roar of cheering from below, as our men stormed through the pass.

Duroc waited till our destroyers were within five yards, and then sat up and fired the pistols, one ! two ! three ! four ! as quick as I can count, and at each shot a man dropped in his tracks. The remaining four held back.

'Now, Leval !' cried Duroc.

I was upon them already with the sword. One I cut down-

wards through the jaw, the next I thrust through the lungs, but before I could disentangle my blade a third, a great bearded giant, clipped his arms round me and held me, calling on his comrade the while—to stab me, I suppose, for I saw the man's hand go to the knife in his belt.

I strove to wrench myself free, and as we reeled round I caught sight of Duroc. He was propped against a boulder, with the one undischarged musket levelled, pistol-fashion, in his unwounded hand. The next instant something whistled past my ear, and there was an ugly splashing sound, followed by a fall, close behind.

Upon the shot, my adversary released me and sprang quickly away. Quickly! but my sabre was quicker.

Then some great weight from above crashed down on to my shoulder, and all was darkness.

When I came to myself, I was lying on a clean pallet in a log-hut, with the scent of fresh-hewn pinewood in my nostrils, and the fresh air blowing through the interstices of the walls. My left arm was tightly bound to my side, and my collar-bone felt as if it were of burning iron.

I turned my head wearily and wonderingly. Close by mine was another pallet, and on it was Duroc.

'Hullo, comrade!' he said, brightly. 'Alive again?'

I nodded and closed my eyes—I was very weak. After a while I opened them again.

'Duroc,' I questioned feebly, 'where are we? What has happened? How came we here?'

'Where are we?' replied Duroc, who seemed in the highest spirits. 'In a special field-hospital, I believe. What happened? Why, when you spitted that hairy fellow so neatly, one of their marksmen sniped you from the cliffs above, and got you in the left shoulder; so you see'—tapping his bandages with his right hand—we are both coopered in the same wing. Down you came, and down he came too, no doubt to see if we were well dead. I could do nothing, for the kick of that infernal musket had nearly broken my arm, and I was thinking the game was up—when there was a volley, and your amiable gentleman went tumbling down the crags, and I found myself among the legs of our men, who were scrambling over the rocks and each other, and cheering like mad. After that I followed your example and fainted, so how we came here I know no more than you.'

He laughed joyously. At that moment the door opened, and Blake, our Irish surgeon, put his merry red face inside.

'Oh, lads,' he cried, in his execrable French, 'so it's talking ye are! 'Tis a good sign, that! Now, lie still whilst I examine ye both.'

He took first my pulse, then Duroc's, and nodded in a satisfied manner.

'You're well enough,' he said. 'I have a visitor waiting for ye.' He threw open the door. 'You may come in, sir,' he called.

He stood aside, and Lefèbre himself entered the hut.

We both tried to straggle to the salute, but he checked us with his hand.

'Lie still, my lads,' he said; and then, drawing up a stool between our pallets and seating himself, he went on: 'Now, just tell me all about it!'

How kind and gentle he was, that great man, like a father with two boys, letting us run on just as we pleased, but checking us when we seemed getting excited, and never worrying us with unnecessary questions. When we had finished, he turned to Blake.

'Well, surgeon,' he said cheerily, 'what is your report? When will your patients be about again?'

'With care and nursing, in a few weeks,' began Blake,—when Duroc broke in in his impetuous way.

'Oh, surgeon! You must get us fit before the end of the campaign!'

'Not before the end of this campaign,' interposed Lefèbre, gravely. 'Not before the end of this campaign. It is over, and,' taking our uninjured hands in each of his, 'you have won it for me, you two!'

We lay back, unable to speak; our manhood was sorely tested. Lefèbre understood.

'Come! Come! Don't look so unhappy,' he said; 'I have no doubt our Master will find plenty of work for us yet. Still, still, young bloods will want to be up and doing. I am not much of a doctor myself,' he continued, turning to Blake, 'but I may be able to be of some use now. Here,' feeling in the breast of his coat, 'is a medicine I prescribe for both of you to take as soon as you are well enough.'

He held out his hand. Something glistened in the palm. It was the Cross of the Legion.

CLAUDE E. BENSON.

*SIXTY YEARS IN THE WILDERNESS.**NEARING JORDAN.*

BY SIR HENRY LUCY.

## CHAPTER XVII.

ON GOING DOWN TO THE SEA IN SHIPS.

It has been my good fortune throughout a long period of time to enjoy the personal friendship of the great Admirals of our mercantile fleet. Among them were Thomas Ismay, who out of small beginnings firmly established the White Star Line; Sir Donald Currie, seneschal of the Castle Line, who died just too soon to see the property he created, in the meanwhile amalgamated with the rival Union Line, absorbed at a princely premium by that still youthful Napoleon of the shipping world, Sir Owen Philipps; the second Lord Inverclyde, who died too soon for full development of hereditary capacity for managing so vast a concern as the Cunard Fleet; Sir Francis Evans, who long time fought Donald Currie on the way to the Cape and back, finally joining his old adversary in management of the Castle Union Line.

Last, but not least in affectionate regard, my old friend, Sir Thomas Sutherland, who in his management of the Peninsular and Oriental Line, emulates the achievement of the Roman Emperor who found Rome built of brick and left it stately in marble. Sir Thomas found the P. and O. Fleet steeped in the hoary traditions of days when the voyage out and home was made round the Cape, occupying a considerable portion of a year. The finances of the company were in corresponding state of decrepitude. By indomitable energy, and capacity amounting to genius, he has brought the old line into its present position of efficiency and prosperity.

It was, and happily remains, the custom of these maritime princes to celebrate the launching of an addition to their fleet by inviting to a trial trip a representative company of guests. The hospitable habit was occasionally extended by trips to witness naval reviews at Portsmouth inaugurated in the reign of Queen Victoria. Thus when, in 1889, the German Emperor visited

Spithead, the *Teutonic* sailed from Liverpool to take her appointed place—a place of honour in contiguity to the Fleet. On the morning of the second day the German Emperor, escorted by Edward Prince of Wales, came aboard and made close inspection of the splendid liner about to make her maiden trip across the Atlantic.

A considerable number of guests, chiefly Parliament men, came down by special train. *En route* John Morley's portmanteau miscarried, and he arrived aboard with no other clothes than those he stood in. The next morning, when walking on deck, his hat blew off, floating serenely out of sight.

'Ah,' said Mr. Chamberlain, smilingly looking on, 'these things supply useful illustrations of the practical working of the Separatist policy.'

There was as usual on these trips some after-dinner speaking. Much was expected from Chauncey Depew, whose fame as a witty talker was at its height. He was disappointed at the reception of a treasured anecdote about a boy 'walking through a churchyard eating green apples and singing "Nearer, my God, to Thee."' It was apparently a little too strong for English taste.

It is a tragic coincidence, never dreamt of by the guests at the dinner-table of the *Teutonic*, that twenty-three years later, from the deck of a sister ship doomed to one of the most calamitous wreckages in history there should rise to Heaven the solemn strain of this hymn played by the heroic bandsmen.

Lord Dufferin, whose speech followed at brief interval that of the American guest, was interrupted by an incident that greatly tickled the fancy of the company. Rising to propose a toast, he got as far as the explanation, 'To the health of my friend—' when the foghorn broke in with a wild shriek of protest almost human in the intensity of its passion. When the outburst and the prolonged roar of laughter that accompanied it subsided, Lord Dufferin, continuing, said, 'The name on my lips when thus gruesomely interrupted was that of our host, Thomas Ismay.'

The *Teutonic* arrived at her moorings on a Friday afternoon, and in order to keep her engagement on the sailing list was obliged to set off back to Liverpool on the Sunday evening. Those who had leisure were made welcome to take the voyage. As Parliament was in Session it was incumbent on another and larger section of the party to return by train to London. Landed on the quay, transhipped from the tender, a remarkable scene followed. Being

Sunday afternoon, there were no dockers or porters to deal with the accumulated luggage. The tender's crew put it ashore, but could do no more. Mrs. Chamberlain, newly married, had, *more Americano*, brought with her that bountiful allowance of personal baggage without which no lady from the United States would travel. The last glimpse I caught of Mr. Chamberlain was when, mounting on the top of the baggage, he, with eyeglass fixed, anxiously scanned the horizon in search of a porter.

For a brief season I earned an unwonted measure of personal popularity. Walking across the wharf to the waiting railway train, I caught sight of a small hand-cart. It was the very thing. I placed on it my gladstone bag and rug. In an instant other overladen wayfarers came up and deposited their goods. Delighted at our good fortune, we got hold of the handle of the cart and cheerily hauled. To our dismay we found it would not move, a circumstance explained when on close examination we found one of the hind wheels had been secured by a locked chain. I of course was not responsible for this. But a coolness suddenly sprang up between disappointed travellers and myself. Sir Frederic Leighton, who, struggling with his portmanteau, joyfully availed himself of the opportunity of getting rid of it, was particularly haughty.

One of the most memorable trips enjoyed on the invitation of Sir Donald Currie was on board the *Tantallon Castle* proceeding to the opening of the Kiel Canal in June 1895. This was the last of a series of voyages devised by Sir Donald for the benefit of Mr. Gladstone. The chairman of the Castle Line was never so happy as when he was at sea. He had his own yacht, but occasionally made trial trips in Scottish waters in one of the big Castle liners. On one of these voyages we visited an ancient castle which, among other heirlooms, contained a contemporary portrait of Rob Roy. It was sorely disillusioning to one brought up on Walter Scott's descriptions of the romantic rover. It more closely resembled the appearance of a red-whiskered commercial traveller, which indeed in one sense the chieftain truly was.

I was one of a very small party on the first trip in the Channel of Sir Donald's beautiful yacht. The others were Sir Joseph Pease and Lord Alverstone, at that time Attorney-General, commonly and affectionately known as Dick Webster. We cruised about from Friday afternoon till Monday morning. On the Sunday evening Sir Donald held a mitigated church service in the saloon. He

read the prayers ; Pease made the responses ; the Attorney-General, noted for possession of a fine voice, formed the choir, and I was the congregation. There was no collection.

Another week-end sea trip that dwells in pleasant memory was given by Sir Francis Evans, then chairman of the Union Line, the principal guest being Mr. Gully. He had recently been elected Speaker of the House of Commons, and was, naturally, a little anxious about his work. According to sailing orders, we were to be back at Southampton on Sunday night in time to catch an early-morning train to London. That arrangement admirably fitted in with the Speaker's engagements. Sunday morning found us off Land's End with plenty of time to reach Southampton as appointed. Suddenly a fog came on, increasing in density till we could hardly see across the deck. There was nothing for it but to slow down and keep the foghorn sounding.

It is difficult to imagine a more dangerous spot for a big liner to find itself entrapped in fog. Once there loomed out of the mist what looked like a mammoth sailing-ship. She came so close that I could almost touch her with my hand. Collision seemed inevitable. Happily she did not touch the almost stationary liner, vanishing in the gloom as swiftly and as silently as she had emerged.

I made many delightful trips in Sir William Wills' (later Lord Winterstoke's) yacht, the *Sabrina*. On week-end voyages the Channel was the limit of our run, spending the Sunday at Dartmouth, Swanage, or other pleasant anchorage. We generally went ashore and took a country drive. At one of these anchorages I set forth on a walk by myself with disastrous consequences. Straying into a country churchyard, I read the inscriptions on the tombstones, always an attractive study. One told how on a certain date a beloved wife had passed away. After mention of this fact, with other personal particulars, the sorrowing widower caused the epitaph to be closed with the line : ' Peace, Perfect Peace.'

There was an ambiguity about that way of putting it that tickled my fancy. At luncheon, on board the yacht, I mentioned my discovery and was made instantly conscious of a chilling silence. Afterwards a fellow-passenger, Mr. Inglis, then chief engineer of the Great Western Railway, afterwards manager, took me aside and told me that on the death of his wife Sir William had had this line engraved on her tombstone. Which shows how dangerous is the habit of miscellaneous quotation.

During the Cowes week in August 1906, the *Sabrina* being moored close by the *Victoria and Albert*, we had opportunity of observing the restless energy of his Majesty King Edward. He was ever passing to and fro in his steam-launch. On Sunday, day of departure of the King and Queen of Spain, whose yacht lay close by the grim figure of a Spanish ironclad on guard, there were many visits to pay. The Royal guests having called on the *Victoria and Albert* pour prendre congé, the visit was promptly returned, the Queen accompanying his Majesty to say good-bye. On returning they paid a farewell visit to the Empress Eugénie, on her yacht, the *Thistle*. After he had made a tour of the yachts still clustering thick off Cowes, the King expressed intention of visiting Sir George Newnes's magnificent yacht, the *Albion*. The guests on board were a dozen M.P.'s, including the Attorney-General. They were bound for Norway, but put off sailing in anticipation of a Royal visit that did not come off, His Majesty being compelled at the last moment to abandon his intention.

Among the group of Royal personages on board the *Thistle*, within sight of the *Sabrina*, the most interesting was the picturesque figure of the Empress Eugénie. It was pretty to see the deference paid to the fallen star. The Empress met her Royal visitors at the head of the gangway. Queen Alexandra greeted her with sisterly salute. The King, baring his head, bowed low and kissed her hand. Earlier visitors were the Princess Christian and the two daughters of the Duke of Connaught. On taking the hand of the Empress each curtsied as they would have done to a reigning monarch.

The Empress walks a little lame, being a chronic sufferer from rheumatism, but she looked well in spite of her fourscore years. A striking incident happened when she went ashore and walked through the Castle gardens enclosing the Club House of the Royal Yacht Squadron. She came upon Sir John Burgoyne, who, thirty-five years ago, when she was fleeing from the wrath of France, gave her a passage in his yacht and through a stormy sea brought her safely to a British port.

I was a passenger on the *Sabrina* for a full month's voyage round the south and west coast of Ireland. This enabled me to look in at parts of Ireland not conveniently accessible by rail. We spent a day at Galway, where I was struck by evidences of departed glory. Time was when it was a prosperous port, the home of well-to-do citizens. There still remain attached to crazy

broken-down mansions, magnificent mahogany doors, the wood imported when Galway did trade with the Spanish colonies. Another and more modern harbour found anchorage for the yacht, the attraction being the desire of our host, director of the Great Western Railway Company, to see the working of a mono-rail passenger train. The beach shallowing too much to permit the yacht to find anything like wharfage, we went ashore in the pinnace. Our disembarkation was watched with profoundest interest by the population. What particularly piqued their curiosity was the problem how Sir William, a man of height and girth as generous in proportion as was his nature, was to be safely delivered from the comparatively frail boat.

'God bless him,' cried an old lady when he cautiously accomplished the manœuvre, 'he'll weigh twenty stone at laste.'

The principle of the mono-rail is adopted from the paniers on the back of an ass, or perhaps more directly from the structure of an outside car. To the perfect working of the system it is necessary that the seats on either side, slung across the centre rail, shall be pretty evenly balanced. A rumour, by this time I expect grown into the respectability of a tradition, tells how upon a day a big Englishman landed from his yacht, and making a trip over the mono-rail was utilised by the guard to counterbalance the weight of the population of the hamlet.

We went yachting with Sir Donald Macfarlane on the *Hiawatha*, when, at the General Election of 1885, he made a bold attack on the Conservative stronghold, Argyllshire. He won it too, against the powerful influence of the Duke. It was a famous victory, largely due to personal popularity gained by his visits in the yacht to outlying parts of the constituency unaccustomed to see a Parliamentary candidate. Steaming homeward-bound after the poll was declared he had a royal reception from the fishermen, who, coming in with their catches of herrings, poured tribute on the snowy decks of the yacht.

Macfarlane was a wonderful shot. His custom of an afternoon was to have empty bottles pitched overboard as the yacht raced along, and use them as targets. He very rarely missed.

During the Parliamentary recess of 1886 we joined the *Hiawatha* at Marseilles and steamed up the Mediterranean towards the Isles of Greece. Editorial duties prevented my going further east than Naples. But we had a delightful three weeks, calling at most of the

points of interest *en route*. We reached Pisa by a new route. Leaving the yacht at anchor at Leghorn, we voyaged thither by the canal in the steam-launch.

Sir John Burns, long time chairman of the Cunard Company, and founder of the Inverclyde peerage, had a yacht familiar from Clyde to Cowes as the *Capercaillie*. He used it a great deal, and had a masterful way of keeping it to himself and his chosen guests. Paying a country visit in the neighbourhood of Dartmoor, we were one day surprised by receipt of a telegram from his eldest son, George, inviting us to join the *Capercaillie* at Oban for a fortnight's cruise. It was a far cry from the vicinity of Land's End to a place within measurable distance of John O'Groats. Travelling day and night we managed to accomplish it in something over twenty-four hours, and were rewarded by a charming cruise.

A second trip in the *Capercaillie*, taken a few years later, had its pleasure marred by tragedy. George Burns, our old friend and fellow-traveller in Japan, was now Lord Inverclyde, chairman of the Cunard Company, owner of the *Capercaillie* and of all his late father's possessions on land and sea. He planned a pretty programme for the pleasure of his guests. Castle Wemyss was their headquarters, and in the bay lay the *Capercaillie*, waiting to take us out for a day's steaming in the Kyles of Bute, or further north. On the last of these little trips, Lord Inverclyde caught a chill which, not threatening at first, rapidly developed into an attack of pneumonia. He was very ill on the morning when the yacht returned to Castle Wemyss, but insisted that his wife should not eclipse the gaiety of the company by making allusion to his condition. So he sat at the luncheon-table gay and smiling, though, as I heard later, he was suffering excruciating pain. The last glimpse I caught of him was when he was seated in the gig, steering the first batch of passengers over to the Castle slip. Still bravely smiling, he nodded good-bye, I little dreaming that it was the final farewell. On landing he went straight to bed, and within a month was dead.

I remember coming across his father, old Sir John Burns, when he was still in personal command of the *Capercaillie*. It was at Cowes during the regatta week. A party from the *Hiawatha* landing at the wharf, I, being burdened with a supply of coppers, went on ahead to pay the toll. At the gate stood a sturdy figure in blue serge and yachting cap. As I came up he held out his hand. Thinking he was the toll-collector, I stretched out mine full of coppers, when,

just in time to avoid an awkward incident, a glance at his face revealed Sir John Burns.

I fancy Sir John, shrewd Scotchman as he was, careful of bawbees, would have smoothed it over by putting the coppers in his pocket.

My first trip on a new P. and O. liner, forerunner of a long succession each brightened with memories of interesting people, was to Antwerp. Amongst the guests were Edmund Yates and George Boughton, not yet R.A., the first an old friend, the second a new acquaintance—acquaintance that blossomed into intimate friendship, broken only by death. The new ship had been fitted up with novel luxuries in the bathroom. Notable was the needle-bath, an apparatus within whose rails the patient stands, turns on a tap, and is pelted at close quarters with water rushing from innumerable pinholes. On a sultry morning, Mr. Barnes, the managing director, suggested that we should try the new bath. I was content with the ordinary tub. Barnes felt it was a duty he owed to the Board and the company that he should try the sprinkler. A few moments after the door next to my bath was closed, from the adjacent compartment came a terrific scream. Barnes getting inside the wire framework, not an easy thing for a stout man, had turned on the hot tap, and was in a few seconds parboiled.

A later trip was paid to Havre, where I saw for the first time battleships painted in the unobtrusive mud colour now universal in fleets. Just as there is a river in Macedon and a river in Monmouth, so there were ships at Cherbourg and ships in the Solent. But there was no nearer approach to what Lord Randolph Churchill on an historic occasion alluded to as 'similarity.' Entering Cherbourg Harbour on Saturday night, the *Himalaya* steamed past two monster masses floating on the water. I took them to be dredgers, and marvelled at their proportions. The idea, born of contemplation of their shape seen in the growing dusk of the evening, was confirmed by the circumstance that they were of a ghastly colour, suggesting that the buckets having drawn up the slime from the bottom of the harbour it had been accidentally and impartially spilled over the hulk. On closer view they turned out to be two of the most powerful ironclads in the French Navy, pioneers of the mighty fleet that entered the harbour next morning and thundered response to the salute of a Russian corvette that lay at anchor. After passing a day in company of these

monstrosities of naval architecture, it was a keen delight to come suddenly upon sunlit Cowes with flocks of bird-like yachts flitting to and fro across the shining Solent.

Whilst at Havre, Ashmead Bartlett, at the time Civil Lord of the Admiralty, was aboard. The chairman, Sir Thomas Sutherland, and Monsieur de Lesseps, proposed to pay a visit of ceremony to the French flagship. Ashmead Bartlett suggested that the Admiral would be more gratified if the Civil Lord of the British Admiralty accompanied them. The proposal was not disputable, and the Civil Lord, retiring to his cabin, re-appeared, after what the waiting chairman regarded as an insufferably long time, in a frock coat, patent-leather boots, and a top hat. There was disposition, not unfamiliar in the House of Commons, to chaff the bustling Civil Lord. As he gingerly descended the companion ladder to gain a footing on the steam-launch, the company crowded against the bulwarks and boisterously cheered him and his top hat.

The incident greatly impressed some Frenchmen who were on board. As the fun grew fast and furious, I heard one say to another in awed tones : '*Il paraît être grand favori. Hein ?*'

These trips, which usually extended from Friday afternoon till Monday morning, were highly popular among hard-worked statesmen, judges, barristers, painters, and men of letters. One of the most constant trippers was John Morley. Lord Selborne, a director of the company, Mr. Ritchie, not yet a peer, Lord Rathmore, Sir Horace Davey, Mr. Justice Bigham (Lord Mersey), and the popular Whip, Richard Causton (now Lord Southwark), indefatigable with his camera, were others.

On the last night of our voyage, Lord Davey, proposing a toast to the health of the Chairman, submitted for his agreement the principle, 'Once a First Tripper, Always a First Tripper'; a suggestion to which Sir Thomas Sutherland cordially responded. As a matter of fact, it was in large measure operative from the first. One met again and again fellow-voyagers on earlier trips. The hand most busy in crossing names off the list was that of Death. I have a pile of the list of passengers on successive voyages extending over more than a quarter of a century. It is sad to think how many have gone on to a place where 'there is no more sea.'

One of the most frequent and most popular of the P. and O. trippers was Czarnikow, a City magnate in the sugar business.

He was one of the best judges of a good cigar I ever met, certainly the most generous dispenser of his treasure. When he came aboard the new liner, he brought with him several boxes of his best, and throughout the voyage almost literally oozed cigars, pressing them by the handful upon his favourites. He was always rather quaintly dressed for a sea voyage. He excelled himself on one occasion when he turned up in a fearsome flame-coloured suit. Complaint was made among his beneficiars that the cigars he as usual produced from manifold pockets, smelt as if they had been singed.

I once paid a week-end visit to Czarnikow in his country home. As Lord of the Manor he felt it incumbent on him to attend morning service in the manorial pew of the parish church. We walked together through a park-avenue a mile long. At a short distance from the house we came upon an empty mineral-water bottle lying on the carriage-road. The lord of the manor, properly as I thought, offended by such untidiness, picked up the bottle and carefully hid it away in the shrubbery. Walking back after Divine service, our souls uplifted by a sermon from the curate, I observed, as we neared the house, signs of preoccupation on my dear host's face. He seemed to be looking for something in the shrubbery. Was he expecting a rabbit? Suddenly he bounded off to the left, stooped down in the shrubbery, and brought out the empty bottle.

'They allow a shilling a dozen for these when returned empty,' he said, a glow of satisfaction suffusing his features.

This has an appearance of penuriousness not, I believe, uncommon with exceedingly rich men. As a matter of fact, Czarnikow was one of the most generous of men, never so happy as when distributing gifts. Every Christmas through a long series of years he sent me, not one box, which would have been kind, but half a dozen boxes of his choicest cigars. Included in the bulky parcel were daintily fashioned boxes of costly bonbons, specially ordered from Paris for my wife. Returning to his country house from business visits to town, he provided himself with supplies of cakes and sweets, which he distributed to the children living in the hamlet at his park gates. They knew the proximate hour of his arrival and, drawn up in eager line on the pathway, caught or scrambled for the good things thrown out through the open window of the carriage. I never knew which was the more delighted, Czarnikow or the children.

Another regular tripper was Moberly Bell, manager of *The Times*. On one voyage a fellow-guest was Mr. John Murray, the publisher, who a week or so earlier had been granted heavy damages from *The Times* in a civil action. He had the cheque photographed, and brought a copy with him. It was an object of much interest among the passengers. As far as I observed, Moberly Bell was the only one who did not have an opportunity of inspecting it. That was of the less consequence since he had seen the original.

Another regular passenger was Sir John Aird. He had an ineradicable passion for giving everybody something. Whenever we touched at a port, he went ashore and gratified his desire. Looking in at Queenstown, on one trip, he brought me a Shillelagh, a natural product of the country he thought might be useful in the lobby of the House of Commons. After dinner, on summer nights, there was often dancing on deck. I have vivid recollection of seeing Sir Thomas Sutherland and Sir John Aird doing a sword dance, the limelight dexterously disposed so as to shine full upon their graceful figures and their rhythmical steps.

The last time I saw Sir John Ardagh—Chief of the Military Intelligence Department, Ministerial disregard of whose timely warnings nearly lost South Africa to the Empire—he was looking over the rail of the liner, saying good-bye to the majority of guests putting off in the tender to catch the train for London. He was on his way to his bath, and had wrapped a towel round his head turban-wise, an arrangement that gave his habitually grave countenance an irresistibly comic look.

'Military Ardour we used to call him years ago in Dublin,' said Lord Rathmore, laughingly nodding good-bye to one of his oldest and most cherished friends.

## CHAPTER XVIII.

### YOUTHFUL INDISCRETIONS.

PERHAPS a little late for conviction to be effectual, I am learning the weight of responsibility for the printed word. I recall four incidents which had quite unexpected results.

Shortly after Lowe had been raised to the Peerage, he, obeying the instinct common in such circumstances, revisited the old quarters. Seated in the Peers' Gallery of the House of Commons he looked

down upon what chanced to be an almost empty Chamber. On his legs was a member whose dullness sufficiently accounted for this desolation. One exception to indifference to his remarks was displayed by Mr. Thomasson, at the time member for Bolton. Exceedingly deaf, he was accustomed to carry with him an ear-trumpet. With this in position, seated on a bench below the gentleman on his legs, he eagerly drank in his words of wisdom.

From the Gallery Lord Sherbrooke blinked down on the scene. It occurred to me that as he regarded the deaf member making strenuous effort to hear what a dullard was saying, he might murmur to himself, ‘What a wanton sacrifice of natural advantages !’

Noting the incident in ‘The Diary of Toby M.P.’ I described the scene, and in a manner not unfamiliar in that veracious chronicle put the words quoted into the mouth of Lord Sherbrooke. The little jape had great vogue, with unexpected consequence. On the publication of Mr. Patchett Martin’s admirable ‘Life of Lowe,’ I found the story, adapted by Lowe as his own, entered in his diary as one of the good things he had flashed across the dinner-table.

The following letter from his biographer explains the matter :

‘Reform Club, Pall Mall. Aug. 10, 1892.

‘DEAR SIR,—Going through Lord Sherbrooke’s papers I found the delightful *bon mot* about the deaf member in the House of Commons. It was without any note or comment which would have led me to infer that it was not actually a saying of his own.

‘I think if you do me the favour again to glance at the chapter dealing with his social conversational qualities, you will perhaps admit that I took some pains to sift the wheat from the tares. But as an admirable article in the present *Quarterly* sets forth, Lowe had for many years been a “peg” on which many wits hung up their “good things.”

‘I can only congratulate you on the invention of a happy saying which displays so much of the true Lowian wit and point, that, finding it among his papers, I naturally inferred that it was his. Lord Sherbrooke, who never referred to his own witticisms, and as a rule seemed to have forgotten the lively sallies which too often stung his more stupid victims, never (as you infer) claimed the authorship of the felicitous invention.

‘May I take this opportunity of thanking you for your excellent “Diary of Two Parliaments,” which as my work testified I found of the utmost service ?

‘Faithfully yours,  
‘A. PATCHETT MARTIN.’

In his 'Reminiscences,' published a few years before his death, Goldwin Smith cites the story as 'one of the highest flashes of Lowe's mordant wit.'

Another example of this form of cerebration, being of later date, is perhaps more widely known. Just before Lord Hartington was, to the irreparable loss of the House of Commons, called to another place, a story was current which greatly tickled London society. It ran to the effect that, taking a lady down to dinner on an evening when earlier he had made an important speech in the House of Commons, she asked whether it was true that at one stage of his argument he had interrupted himself with a prolonged yawn. He admitted the indictment.

'How could you?' said the lady.

'Ah,' said Lord Hartington, 'you don't know how dull the speech was.'

*Mea culpa!* On the occasion in question I observed Lord Hartington, speaking from the Front Opposition Bench, gallantly attempting to restrain a yawn. The rest I unscrupulously invented. Some years later, the Duchess of Devonshire told me that nothing would disturb the Duke's conviction that the conversation, as reported, actually took place. He had heard or read the story so frequently that he had come to accept it as a matter of fact.

It found a place in the 'Life of the Duke of Devonshire,' written by Mr. Bernard Holland, sometime his private secretary. In reply to a note confessing iniquity and enclosing a cutting of the story from the source of its original publication, Mr. Holland replied:

'Kensington Square, W. Oct. 29, '91.

'DEAR SIR HENRY LUCY,—Thanks for your letter and enclosure. Evidently your story captivated His Grace, as it was exactly the thing which he felt and would have liked to have said—so there you showed the highest art.

'He was always bored by his own speeches, and so made sure that everyone else must be. I wonder how many of the famous sayings in history (excluding those repeated by Hansard) were actually said, or how many grew, and being appropriate, flourished. The "Et tu, Brute," etc.

'Yours sincerely,  
BERNARD HOLLAND.'

Another instance of this curious habit of imagining one has really said or done something of which he was wholly innocent leaps

to light in the 'Memoirs of Dr. Kenealy,' compiled by his daughter. Describing her father's taking his seat on being returned for the Borough of Stoke, she writes :

'The story that he hung his umbrella on the Speaker's mace was true. He described the incident, amused. In sheer absence of mind, when called upon to record his name, he found that he had brought up his umbrella. Looking about for some place to bestow it, a convenient knob upon the mace revealed itself, and there he hung it.'

Kenealy never hung his umbrella on the mace, for the sufficient reason that, that sacred emblem of authority not extending beyond the breadth of the table on which it lies, such an arrangement would have been impossible. Coming up to the table, he certainly brought with him a stout gingham with generously curved hook. When the oath was administered he leaned the umbrella against the table, and took the Bible in hand. Exuberant fancy suggested the crowning grotesqueness of hooking the umbrella on to the mace.

It was described as a matter of fact in the Parliamentary record, 'Under the Clock,' published in the *World* in the mid-'seventies. Thence it passed into current history, and, it seems, had no more devout believer than Kenealy himself.

Only the other night I heard an ex-Minister of wide renown delight a small dinner-party with a graphic account of an historic scene in the House of Commons. It happened on a March night in the Session of 1884. The business before the House was a resolution, moved by a Radical member, closing the door of the House of Lords against the Bishops. Towards midnight the late Viscount Cross, then Sir Richard, appeared upon the scene. As his dress denoted, he had been dining out.

Always severe, even magisterial in manner when dealing with argument put forth by Radicals, he was on this occasion preternaturally impressive. He had unearthed a declaration on the subject under discussion made by Mr. Gladstone in 1870. This, written out on a piece of paper, he, by way of preface to his speech, waved triumphantly towards the crowded benches where the Radicals, some of whom had also been dining, sat in merriest mood.

The gesture, a little obscure as it stood without explanation, led up to the remarkable scene that followed. Members opposite tittered. Cross, whose objection to laughter was deeply rooted,

looked up from the mysterious note he was studying, and through his spectacles regarded the irreverent throng with a glance that should have cowed them.

'I hear an honourable gentleman smile,' he said in tones of severest rebuke.

The titter grew into a ripple of laughter.

Climax was reached when Sir Richard concentrated his attention on his MS. 'What did the Prime Minister say in 1870?' he inquired.

He looked round in vain for answer. All forthcoming was this provoking laughter. He was in no hurry to satisfy curiosity. Mention of the Prime Minister reminded him that the Right Hon. Gentleman was not present. Where was he? Why should he absent himself on so momentous an occasion? After discursive commentary on this remissness he came back to the scrap of paper and the reiterated inquiry, 'What did the Prime Minister say in 1870?'

The ripple of laughter now became a roar.

'Why,' he paused to ask, 'should hon. members opposite laugh when I cite the name of the Prime Minister? Have they so little respect for the opinions of the Right Hon. Gentleman?'

The more they laughed the more obstinately Sir Richard, with increasing severity of tone and look, pursued the inquiry.

Members rolled about their seats in paroxysms of laughter. Men who were never known to smile, laughed till the tears ran down their cheeks.

Considering that thirty years have sped since our host read this narrative in the 'Cross-bench' article of the *Observer*, he recited it with remarkable fullness and accuracy. The point that most delighted the company related to the late J. G. Talbot, member for Oxford University, a devout Churchman of lugubrious countenance and melancholy voice. He was represented in the article as having gone about the lobbies after the division shaking his head, wringing his hands, and murmuring, 'On such a solemn occasion too.'

Nearing Jordan, presently to cross over to its farther shore, I derive something of the consolation supposed to attach to deathbed confessions when I say this was another pure invention. J. G. Talbot, an estimable man, a typical character unknown to the present Parliament, was in his place during Sir Richard Cross's performance. I remember him looking on with countenance that deepened in

sorrow. The remark attributed to him was one he might have been expected to make.

As a matter of fact he said nothing.

## CHAPTER XIX.

### FROM MY DIARY.

THE subjoined letter from Sir Edward Watkin, long time Chairman of the South-Eastern Railway Company (accidentally overlooked in order of date), illustrates his tireless energy and his aptitude to be in advance of his time.

‘ Rose Hill, Northenden, Cheshire. Jan. 28, ‘88.

‘ **MY DEAR LUCY,**—Many—many—thanks for your continuing kindness.

‘ I fear I shall be mainly kept down here as my poor wife’s chief nurse.

‘ Could you run down here some day—leave King’s Cross 2 p.m.—here 6.30 p.m.—and dine and sleep—and talk over daily paper, Sunday included, at  $\frac{1}{2}d.$ ? Say.

‘ I am still in *great* anxiety here.

‘ Ever truly,  
E. WATKIN.’

The financial terms attached to the offer of the Editorship of the paper were attractive. But my experience as Editor of the *Daily News* was not conducive of desire to make fresh experiment in that department of journalistic work. The halfpenny morning newspaper has in other hands proved a huge success. Here is the germ of it.

A better-known idea of Sir Edward’s was the Channel Tunnel. At the present date it appears to be moribund. I venture to predict that it is not dead, but only sleeping.

*April 7, 1893.*—A telegram just to hand announces the death of Emin Pasha. It is not the first time the explorer has been killed by telegraph. On this occasion there is disposition to accept the report as a matter of fact. I met at dinner last night one of Stanley’s lieutenants who saw a good deal of Emin in Africa, and learned from him the story of his life. Some of its aspects have been made known in public records. The romance that underlies

the appearance of the prosaic, spectacled German, has, I believe, never been told.

Emin's real name is Edward Schneitzer. He was born fifty-two years ago of Jewish parents in Silesia. He went to school in Hungary, and there fell in love with a Magyar girl of his own age. On leaving school he went to Berlin; studied medicine, and took high honours. He did not feel any impulse to settle down in life, and whilst still a young man set out for the East, meaning to study Oriental languages. He found a billet under the Turkish Government, entering their service as a doctor, gallantly fighting the cholera then raging in Constantinople. All his spare time he gave to the study of languages, with the result that when my friend met him in the course of the Stanley Expedition he found it as easy to converse with him in English as if he had been born within sound of Bow Bells. Russian, Turkish, Arabic, Persian, French, and Italian were also numbered among his gift of tongues.

After residing in Turkey some years he made the acquaintance of Ismail Pasha—not the ex-Khedive, but a famous Turkish soldier who held the Governorship of Scutari. He became the Pasha's intimate personal friend and family physician. One day Ismail, overcoming in the extremity of the hour the prejudices of the Turk, admitted the young German doctor into the harem to attend on his wife, who seemed sick unto death. Schneitzer discovered in the patient the Hungarian girl to whom in boyhood he had given his heart, and whom he still fondly loved. In course of time, by one of those *bouleversements* common enough in the career of Turkish officials, Ismail Pasha was deposed from his governorship, and carried off to Trebizond, where he was lodged in a dungeon. Schneitzer, at this time in his thirtieth year, took charge of the young wife, and the two proceeded to Constantinople, where Schneitzer devoted himself to the task of obtaining the pardon and release of his old patron.

This was brought about after long delay, Ismail Pasha being taken into favour again and made Governor of Janina, in Albania. He did not long survive the horrors of his imprisonment, and on his death Schneitzer for the first time confessed his love for the Hungarian, whom in 1875 he married at Constantinople. That nothing should be needed to the completeness of the domestic tragedy she died in childbirth, and Schneitzer, who had now assumed the name of Emin, closed his account with the civilised world.

History records how he became Gordon's lieutenant in the

Soudan ; how he stuck to his post when the Mahdist revolution broke out ; how Stanley went to his rescue ; how he found and lost him again. Now, if the latest report is true, poor Emin's troubled course is closed. He has sped to rejoin his lost love.

*June 7, 1893.*—Within the memory of at least one member of the judicial Bench, who told me the story at Grand Night dinner, a quaint custom prevailed at Lincoln's Inn. Every day at noon a servant went to the outer hall door and three times called aloud, '*Venez Manger !*' There were none to come to eat except a few gaping street boys, and nothing on the table to eat had they accepted the invitation. But 300 years ago they used to dine in the Inn at twelve o'clock, and this was the fashion of bidding the students to their midday meal. Last night being Grand Day of Trinity Term, Benchers and students dined together at Lincoln's Inn, the banquet being of quite different style and proportions from that spread to the cry of '*Venez Manger !*'

The Duke of York is a Bencher of the Inn, and for the first time dined in Hall. Sir Charles Russell, Treasurer of the year, hurried over from the Behring Sea Arbitration Court to preside, and eight or ten more or less distinguished guests were bidden to the feast. The students, all gowned, were in their places shortly after seven o'clock, in pleased anticipation of the fact that, for this time only, they were to have served for them exactly the same dinner as was prepared for the Benchers' table.

Meanwhile, the Benchers and their guests assembled in a private room. When dinner was announced they filed off to the dining-hall two and two, a Bencher conducting a guest as far as guests were supplied, the remainder of the Benchers trooping in by themselves. It was curious to observe that the Duke of York had no precedence granted to him. Sir Charles Russell went out first, leading the Archbishop of York, who sat at his right hand, the guest of the evening. The Duke, as Bencher, escorted the Lord Chief Justice, others following in due order. It had been arranged that the Duke was to take in Lord Ripon. At the last moment the Marquis was prevented from keeping his engagement. This was a happy accident for the Duke who in Lord Coleridge, perhaps the most famous *raconteur* of London society, found a livelier companion than the estimable but not animated Secretary of State for the Colonies.

I happened to be sitting in a position whence I had a near and full view of our King-that-is-to-be. The impression he creates is decidedly favourable. In appearance he has the strong family

resemblance that marks the Guelphs. Not quite so tall as his father, much slighter in figure, he shows in his face the tanned colour gained by sea life. He is much more lively than any of his uncles or the general run of his cousins, in this respect resembling his father. His manner is excellent, being absolutely free from anything like *hauteur* or restraint. He laughed merrily at some of Lord Coleridge's stories, and on the whole seemed to have that capacity of finding interest and amusement in passing events which to his royal father makes life worth living.

After H.R.H. had retired a few of the guests lingered over their last cigar. Lord Coleridge shyly yielded to pressure to tell again the story that had evidently tickled the fancy of the Prince. It related to an ex-Lord Chancellor who gave occasional dinners at which the scarcity of the meats was equalled only by the scanty of the wine. One night when his Lordship was entertaining a select company of judges and leaders of the Bar, a section of the party at the end of the table remote from their host became almost boisterously merry.

'They seem rather noisy down there,' said the pleased Lord Chancellor to his neighbour; 'I wonder what it's all about.'

'My dear Lord,' said the amiable guest, 'it is only the natural consequence of even a little wine taken on an empty stomach.'

*July 6, 1893.*—At the wedding to-day of the Duke of York and the Princess May, Gladstone stood in the brilliant throng without display of a single order on his uniform. The reason for this rarely distinguished appearance is simple and imperative. The Prime Minister did not wear an order because he does not own one. He who has showered stars on others, and given garters to Dukes, does not possess the right to wear a bit of red or yellow ribbon. That is a proud pre-eminence from which at this time of day he is not likely to step down even to the level of the peerage. The uniform he wore was that of an Elder Brother of Trinity House, familiar enough with him on Court gala occasions, since it is his only one. It suits him admirably, giving him quite a quarter-deck air.

It does not reach the splendid effect wrought by the one other State dress he has upon public occasion arrayed himself withal. That is the official gown of the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Only once I have seen him in it. It was at the opening of the new Law Courts by the Queen. As he stood on the dais, with the simple folds of the silk gown wrapped about him, one understood why the ancient Romans wore the *toga*.

One other appanage Gladstone cherishes in addition to his Trinity uniform and Chancellor of the Exchequer's gown is a State carriage. This is a lumbering relic of olden times before railways were, when it was necessary for English gentlemen travelling about the country to own a suitable conveyance. It is kept in London, and comes out only upon such occasions as the Royal wedding. On that day, Gladstone drove to St. James's in it, and afterwards came down to the House of Commons, the police and attendants, familiar with his dingy victoria, amazed at the majesty of the footman hanging on behind, just as if his master were a marquis or a duke.

*July 8, 1893.*—A member of the House of Commons who has torn himself away from his charming country house to serve the State at Westminster brings with him a delightful story. One of the prized treasures of his ancestral residence is a hall whose beautiful oaken floor is lovingly kept in the highest state of polish. Among the house-party last week was a gentleman occupying high position in a department of the Civil Service, who, like the late Miss Kilmansegg, sports a wooden leg. The host, observing him tripping over the polished floor, and anxious for his safety, delicately hinted a caution.

'It's all right, old man,' the guest cheerily replied. 'Your floor certainly is slippery; but I've got a sharp nail at the end of my wooden leg.'

In the May number of *CORNHILL* the following footnote appeared:

'Early in Mr. Asquith's Premiership this anomaly [of no place being assigned to the Prime Minister in the Table of Precedence] was on the initiative of his Majesty removed, the Prime Minister on State or social occasions ranking before the Primate.' I have received many letters pointing out the inaccuracy of this statement. Thanking my courteous correspondents individually, I print a few words which set forth the facts authoritatively.

Writing from Hyères on April 29, Colonel Prideaux, in a genial letter of which I hope to make fuller use elsewhere, says: ' . . . According to the Table of Precedency on page 141 of Whittaker's Almanac, the order of precedence runs thus: Archbishop of Canterbury, Lord High Chancellor, Archbishop of York, Prime Minister. Mr. Asquith therefore ranks after not only the Primate of All England and the Primate of England, but after one of the officials of his own Cabinet.'

(*To be continued.*)

SPRAGGE'S CANYON.<sup>1</sup>

BY HORACE ANNESLEY VACHELL.

## CHAPTER IX.

## A BRUSH FIRE.

## I.

UPON the day before the National holiday, the tide happened to be exceptionally low. George and Hazel explored an outlying reef in the hope of finding *abalones*. Under some wet kelp, Hazel discovered an immense shell which George promised to polish for her. He set about this congenial task with his usual promptness and energy, Hazel turning the grindstone, whilst George held the shell against it. The process takes time, and lends itself to desultory conversation. When rough-and-ready attrition had removed the ugly exterior, George fetched acid and pumice-stone. Slowly the shell began to reveal the most exquisite iridescent tints, becoming a thing of real beauty. Hazel was charmed, but she could not resist the temptation to apply this pretty object-lesson to herself and her companion. When he presented the polished specimen, she thanked him demurely, saying :

‘ I should like to do that to you.’

‘ Hold my nose to the grindstone ? ’

‘ Bring out all the iridescence in you.’

‘ Slick me up, you mean ? ’

She nodded, smiling at him. Yes ; he was her *abalone*. She had discovered him, seen beneath a rough encrusted surface, which the pumice of tact could remove, revealing unexpected beauties. Much to her delight, George ‘ played up.’

‘ You kin do what you please with me, dear.’

He gazed at her with unabashed devotion, likely to express itself in overwhelming speech. She said hastily :

‘ That’s it. It would *please* me.’

‘ It pleased Mis’ Van Horne to buy me that outfit o’ clothes.’

‘ Clothes don’t matter much to men,’ replied Hazel, ‘ but the

<sup>1</sup> Copyright, 1914, by H. A. Vachell, in the United States of America.

mind must be kept bright and polished. I don't think Mrs. Bungard did her duty by you, George.'

'I used ter sass her considerable. Pore old hen! She couldn't inspire love in her scholars—see?'

'Perhaps not.'

'That's jest whar you've the bulge.'

Blushing, she diverted the talk.

'Any plans for this afternoon?'

'We kin fish from the rocks, if you feel like it. Rock-cod and smelts. Mebbe a big tussle with a conger. Or the pompano might be running.'

'I shall love it, if I'm not keeping you from your work.'

'Pshaw! It's a fact all the same that yer the first woman as ever did keep me from my work.'

'It will be heavenly on the rocks.'

'You bet!'

She held up a warning finger. He was quick enough to understand her instantly.

'I'll be good,' he promised. 'An' if I git too warm, I kin jump into the sea and cool off.'

She laughed joyously, captivated by his passion for her, and by her ability to control it. George laughed with her, thinking how pretty she was, and growing prettier in his Canyon, prettier and stronger and more womanly. But he frowned as he stared at the shell in her hand.

'I suppose,' he said slowly, 'that I am like that ther abalone. Anyways, I freeze on tight to my rocks. Say, did you notice that you wasn't strong enough ter pull it off?'

'Why, yes.'

'Chinamen hunt fer 'em, and dry the meat. Once, a feller got his fingers pinched. The tide rose and drowned him.'

'What?'

'It's a cold fact. Happened off Point Lobos.'

'How horrible!'

'One Chinee more or less don't matter. He shouldn't hav monkeyed with what he didn't sabee. Gee! Thar's Maw beckonin' to us. It's time fer dinner.'

Hazel hurried upstairs to wash her hands. She placed the shell upon her dressing-table, deciding that it would hold pins and hairpins; but she could not wean her thoughts from the Chinaman slowly and inexorably submerged. If she were not strong enough to tear George from his rocks——!

## II.

After the midday meal, George busied himself with his fishing gear. They were about to start for the rocks below the condor's eyrie when a neighbour galloped up. Hazel overheard a few words which seemed to have a galvanising effect upon George. The neighbour left as swiftly as he had come.

'Brush-fire,' said George. 'I must go help.'

'Can I go, too?'

'If you like.'

'How exciting!'

'Excitin'? You bet! If the trade starts a-blowin' good an' hard, the fire may sweep Aguila off the earth!'

'Oh!'

'Every man'll turn out. I'll hitch up the buggy.'

He did so without wasting a precious second. As they raced over the rough road, George sat silent, with frowning brows and compressed lips. The trade wind was blowing and increasing in strength. As soon as they topped the divide, George pointed his whip at a distant pillar of smoke, rising high into the sky, and flanked by low banks of blacker smoke.

'They can't put out that,' said Hazel.

'They'll light a back-fire.'

Soon afterwards they could hear the roar of the flames, and the crackling of the dry chaparral as the fire licked it up. A long way in front of the fire was a line of men.

George hitched the buggy to the road fence, and helped Hazel to descend.

'It'll be a tough fight,' he muttered.

He took his place in the line, armed with a wet gunny-sack and plenty of matches. Hazel looked on.

The back-fire burnt slowly against the westerly breeze. It tried, of course, to burn with the wind; and it was each man's business to prevent this, for a back-fire out of control may prove more disastrous than the original conflagration.

Hazel was quick to perceive the object upon which the workers were concentrating their energies. Already a long strip of burnt ground lay between them and the approaching tide of destruction, but that strip was neither wide enough nor long enough.

George worked desperately, lighting tiny fires, allowing each fire to increase up to a certain point, and then extinguishing it on the eastern side by beating out the flames with his gunny-sack.

He darted hither and thither, the impersonation of activity and energy. Hazel realised that he took greater 'chances' than the other men, relying upon his superior strength and agility. She wondered if she could help. Two or three other women were carrying wet gunny-sacks to the men. Hazel joined them. She dipped a sack into a bucket of water, let it soak for an instant, and then carried it dripping to George.

'Wind's stronger,' he growled.

The smoke from the original fire drifted down wind, making Hazel choke, and filling her eyes with tears. Sparks came with that acrid smoke, falling into the dry grass behind the fighting-line.

'You watch out fer them sparks,' shouted George.

Hazel obeyed, breathless with excitement. The lust of battle assailed her, as the enemy crept closer and closer. Fortunately, the fire was still confined to the sage brush and chaparral, which burned fiercely but slowly. Such a fire in a bunch-grass pasture, with a strong wind behind it, would have raced on with overpowering speed, leaping all obstacles such as roads or rivers.

Gradually the scene became weirdly grotesque. In and out of the smoke and flames danced fifty men, black from head to foot. The deadly sparks, the shrapnel more to be dreaded than the advancing waves of fire, fell thickly beyond the strip of burnt ground. To extinguish these promptly every energy of body and mind came into active play. Garments were torn off and flung upon smouldering spots, picked up again and flung down elsewhere.

Pat Hennessy arrived with a spring-wagon. He was too old to fight fire, but he mixed gallons of weak whisky and water, which the women carried in pails to the thirst-tormented demons dancing amongst the flames.

Hazel's imagination blazed as fiercely as the chaparral. Yes; this was an experience common to all foothill folk, one of Nature's scourges, the flail of Fate, threshing hope and faith and charity from the hearts of men. If those sparks prevailed, nothing could save Aguila and the little homes which encompassed the hamlet. Within an hour, what would be left but a few charred scrub-oaks and smouldering piles of rubbish? The strenuous work of two generations obliterated!

Hazel remained near George, supplying him with wet sacks. She noticed that he refused the pannikin of whisky and water which one of the men tendered him. His amazing energy seemed to

radiate from him, inciting the other workers to fresh activity. He shouted at them, and they responded hoarsely.

'George,' she said, 'you're killing yourself.'

He laughed. Derisive amusement seemed to flash from his white teeth and blue eyes.

'We'll win out.'

They did. The memory of previous victories sustained them; each man had fought fire at least a score of times. At the critical moment the children came running from the school-house; boys and girls attacked the falling sparks with shouts of glee. Hazel was petrified with astonishment. Did everybody, except herself, regard this visitation of God as a—joke?

The advancing battalions met the strip of burnt ground, tried desperately to leap it, advanced again and again to the assault, and then surrendered.

The battle was over.

The villagers stood in groups talking and laughing. Some of the men were half naked. Many were severely scorched. Out of smoke-begrimed faces shone bloodshot eyes still aglow with the light of victory.

'I'll have a big drink now,' said George.

'George fit like a tiger,' remarked one of the men.

As the excitement died down, the sense of danger seemed to evaporate with it. Mr. Bungard stalked amongst his scholars, ordering them peremptorily to the school-house.

'You've had your recess,' he remarked grimly.

George turned to Hazel:

'Time to catch a big rock-cod yet.'

'Oh, George!'

'I mean it. Let's pull outer this! Gee! Yer pretty clothes is ruined.'

'I don't care. It was—grand.'

### III.

An hour later, they were calmly fishing as if nothing had happened. The tide swirled amongst the rocks; the gulls and cormorants were diving into the clear waters; the sun shone out of cloudless skies.

Peace after War.

To the south-west a soft haze hung over the landscape, all that

was left to remind Hazel of the fire. It softened delightfully the crude hard outlines of the dunes. The girl listened to the muffled thunder of the combers, thinking of the forces behind them, the blind forces ever ready to wreck and destroy. It happened that she had been absent from Oakland at the time of the great earthquake. But she had listened to a thousand stories of that awful catastrophe and the horrors of the fire following it.

George said little, disappointed because the fish were not biting. Only one rock-cod lay upon the rocks. He said abruptly :

' I feel like going in swimmin'.'

' Please don't.'

' Why not ?'

' You might be drowned.'

' What an idee !'

' This fire has scared me. Have you forgotten all about it already ? '

' Why, yes. It's—out.'

She made no reply, but, inwardly, she was amazed at his indifference, at his calm acceptance of perils constantly impending, and on occasion taking place. After a long pause she said slowly :

' If a fire swept your Canyon—— ?'

' Gee ! Thar wouldn't be much left ?'

' Are you fully insured ?'

' One ain't never fully insured.'

' Heavens ! Doesn't it keep you awake, nights ?'

He shrugged his shoulders, smiling pleasantly.

' We must take our chances.'

Presently, in spite of her protests, he retired behind some rocks, undressed, and leapt into the sea. She watched his head, a dark speck upon the waters, and the white shoulders flashing in and out of the water. He swam far out till her soul sickened with terror. She thought to herself : ' Oh, I do love him ! If he sank before my eyes I should go mad.'

A rock-cod engrossed her attention. He was a big fellow, and she handled him clumsily, eventually losing him, because the line was cut by a sharp reef. She stopped fishing, absorbed in thought, watching the head now almost out of sight. His vigour and strength seemed to accentuate her own weakness. For the first time she began to doubt her power to mould this primal man according to the Oakland pattern.

She tried to behold herself as George's wife, the mother of his children, living on the ranch and for the ranch, a prey to terrors which such women as Mrs. Spragge and Samantha ignored. She reckoned up deliberately the 'chances': drought, disease, fire!

Strangely humiliated, unable to cope with her own fears, and yet excited, ravaged by her emotions, knowing that life had become acutely interesting, she sat still, with her pretty hands folded upon her lap, waiting for George to come back.

#### IV.

He looked attractively fresh and young after his long swim, as he told her that he was ravenously hungry.

'Fish ain't on the bite, but I am. Let's go eat something.'

They returned to the ranch. George picked some berries, and returned from the kitchen with a plate piled high with newly baked cookies, and a jug of milk. They sat together in the shade of a cottonwood, with the creek bubbling at their feet. It was that pleasant hour in Southern California when the shadows begin to steal across the foothills, turning them from drab brown into lavender and rose. The cattle were wandering into the open pastures; the quail were calling. Looking up, Hazel could see the sensitive leaves of the cottonwood vibrating beneath the evening breeze, singing their vespers as the sun declined into the ocean.

'Bully, ain't it?' said George.

'Heavenly.'

'You're jest lovin' it, Hazel, ain't ye?'

'Of course I love this. Who wouldn't? It's simply idyllic.'

'What's that?'

She explained not quite so lucidly as usual, trying to indicate a pastoral charm necessarily fugitive and elusive, something to be touched, not firmly grasped, by the dweller in cities. George was slightly puzzled. Every aspect of rural life delighted him.

'I suppose you liked fighting that awful fire?'

'Why, yes.'

'And those other hateful things?'

'What things?'

'The dry years, that horrid plague of ticks! Ugh!'

He answered with heartless philosophy:

'After a dry season, the rain is great. I've gone out many a time and stood in it, till I was soaked through and through. One wallers! Same feeling about camp-fires. I'd love to camp out

with you. A man gets good and tired, dog-weary, by Jing ! Mebbe it's dark as pitch in the hills. More'n onct I've bin plum lost. And then one sees the camp-fire, jest a tiny spark in the night. Gee ! That's immense !'

He drew in his breath, with a sigh of ineffable satisfaction, while she was thinking : ' How little pleases him ! How satisfied with what he has and is ! '

George continued drawlingly :

' Pears to me, Hazel, that we couldn't enjoy good times without bad times.'

' Contrast colours life.'

' Mighty slick—that. I slept fine after I come in last night because—'

He stopped suddenly, with a smile curling his lips.

' Because ? '

' I was out in the hills last night.'

' Out in the hills ? Why ? '

' That's another secret.'

He laughed gaily, but Hazel was piqued. Not to make a mystery of George's nocturnal wanderings, let it be recorded that he had spent many wakeful hours beside a deer-lick, because Hazel had expressed a wish to taste venison. George meant to surprise her, and had duly sworn Samantha and his mother to strict secrecy. Venison, moreover, was not quite in season, although the bucks in the Canyon were fat enough to kill. He intended to try again this same night, stealing out of the house when Hazel was fast asleep.

As she remained silent, he murmured slyly :

' Curious, air ye ? '

' I am.'

She spoke curtly, with a disdain wasted upon him.

' Always ready to tell my secrets when you give me the nod.'

He hoped that she would smile, with the very slightest inclination of her head, but she looked down the narrow Canyon, sitting upright, with her lips primly pressed together.

' I must do my chores,' said George.

## V.

She sat on till it was dusk, wondering why George went into the hills at night. What could be the meaning of these extraordinary vigils ?

As she mounted the stairs, she saw Samantha entering her own room. Hazel followed Samantha into that small, austere chamber, and sat down upon the hard, narrow bed. Samantha slipped out of a nondescript garment which she wore when milking, and hung it behind the door, while Hazel chattered about the fire.

'They said that George fought like a tiger.'

'He would that.'

'Really and truly he seemed to like it.'

'Dessay he did.'

'I helped—a little.'

Samantha nodded, as she began to wash her face and hands, scrubbing them thoroughly after a fashion which dismayed Hazel. She jumped up, protesting.

'You'll ruin your nice skin.'

'With good soap and water?'

'Certainly. A little cooling cream to remove the dust—'

'Gracious! I should feel messy.'

'You have such a nice white skin. It's your duty to take great care of it.'

Samantha faced her suddenly. The redness of her cheeks may have been caused by the friction of a coarse towel.

'Why should I take care of it?'

Hazel replied discreetly:

'For its own sake. It makes me mad when we're accused of making ourselves look nice to please the men.'

'But, don't we?'

'Certainly I don't.'

Samantha looked slightly incredulous as she continued her ablutions. Hazel described the fishing and George's long swim, ending carelessly:

'He'll sleep sound after all that, won't he?'

'I reckon George allers does.'

'But he was in the hills last night.'

'I want to know!'

'Didn't he tell you? What can take him there?'

'Search me,' replied Samantha.

Hazel bit her lip, certain that Samantha could have answered the question, had she chosen to do so. Feeling much exasperated, she went to her own room, soothing her ruffled feeling by making a careful *toilette* designed possibly to provoke envy in Samantha rather than admiration in George.

At supper, the family talked of the morrow's barbecue and the guests bidden to the feast. The fire, so Hazel remarked, was accepted as an incident of the past. Want of imagination prevented the Spragges from considering what might have happened had the flames leapt the narrow obstacle between them and the village built of wood. Mrs. Spragge and Samantha, like George, had lost interest in the fire because it was out.

Throughout the meal, Hazel felt that Fate was treating her ignobly, moving her hither and thither as if she were a pawn upon a chess-board. It was appalling to reflect that she could not read her own mind, which seemed to change from hour to hour. She envied Mrs. Spragge, monumentally incapable of change, as solid a part of the Canyon as the high cliffs upon its western boundary. She wondered whether she could ever achieve the placid silence of Samantha, or listen tolerantly to George when he fell to praising indiscriminately such very ordinary folk as the Bungards and Goldenheimers. Beneath the courtesies of the women, she perceived an amorphous hostility. One trained intelligence measured itself against three that were untrained. The numerical odds, however, did not daunt Hazel. Nor did the prospect of a fight dismay her. Mind, surely, would triumph over muscle. A victory would justify the money lavished upon her education.

## CHAPTER X.

### THE BARBECUE.

#### I.

BELOW the bridge, where once Judge Lynch held court, about a hundred yards from the marsh, grew a big patch of willows through which the creek meandered. In the middle was George's barbecue ground. Long ago, he had cut down a number of willows and rooted up their stumps. Result—a circle some thirty feet in diameter of smooth surface, hard as a threshing-floor. The surrounding willows were trimmed so that the branches arched overhead. The sun was almost excluded, but a few rays found their way through the interlaced boughs, dappling the shade, and producing an exquisite effect. Hard by bubbled the creek, singing its song before it degenerated into a stagnant slough. Ferns bordered the stream, and watercress grew thickly green in the pools. Lower down were trenches for roasting the beef, and long spits of willow lay

ready beside them. Upon the bare ground George had pegged a piece of canvas. The ladies of the party attended to everything else, except the roasting of the meat. That was held to be a man's business. George esteemed himself a master cook at this difficult art, having graduated under the tutelage of a Spanish Californian, one of the pleasure-loving Latins who had vanished after the death of Don Juan Aguilá.

Hazel watched the preparations for the feast with delighted interest. Early in the forenoon George prepared the furnace. By eleven o'clock a narrow pit was half full of glowing embers which furnished just the right amount of heat without any smoke. Upon the willow spits were impaled morsels of beef, each chunk being separated from its fellow by a piece of fat.

George wore his rough overalls, and a well-washed blue-flannel shirt open at the throat. The sleeves, rolled high above the elbow, surmounted massive arms. His face glowed red as the embers in the pit. His blue eyes seemed to have absorbed tiny flames from the same source.

Hazel, who had taken a short course of Greek history, decided that Agamemnon must have looked like George.

Since their visit to the village, he had said nothing to Hazel which might reveal his thoughts. She knew that she had given him food for thought; and she perceived that he was chewing the cud of it with an exasperating deliberation common to men who have not an easy habit of speech. More, he had spent another night, or part of another night, away from home, and when she asked him where he had been and what he had been doing, he merely laughed and said as before :

' Gee ! We air curious.'

Meanwhile, love-making was suspended. Hazel was grateful for this. But each morning a trout was freshly caught for her breakfast and a rose was placed beside her plate. If only this handsome lover would gratify her curiosity as well as her palate !

The vigils, let it be added, were spent in vain. The fat buck never came to the deer-lick.

The company assembled in good season. Mrs. Goldenheimer spoke for the other guests when she said to Hazel :

' I just love to smell the meat when it's roasting. It gives me the finest kind of appetite.'

Pat Hennessy brought bottles of lager beer and claret, rough Zinfandel, the pure juice of the Californian grape, heady but pleasant to drink. These were placed carefully in the creek. Mrs. Bungard,

wearing thread gloves and a drab-coloured gown, presented a box of butternut candy. Uncle Zed provided cigars. Mr. and Mrs. Adolf Geldenheimer shone conspicuous in new clothes rather too smart for the occasion. Adolf was as short and plump as his wife. Hazel, who had attended a Jewish wedding in Oakland, tried to picture Adolf as a bridegroom, vested with a white sheet, and wearing a tall silk hat. He carried a parcel of *Delicatessen*, boned anchovies, liver-sausage and goose-breast. Mrs. Spragge did not quite approve of such 'extras,' but they were graciously accepted in the spirit with which they were offered. Adolf, greatly impressed by Miss Goodrich, prattled in his turn of city pleasures.

'My wife,' he said confidentially, 'was a Schwartz of San José. A daughter of Isidore Schwartz.'

Hazel smiled, the name was familiar.

'Isidore Schwartz,' repeated Adolf, with gusto. 'You've read his ads in the papers. He's paid as high as three thousand dollars for a front page of some special edition.'

'Oh, yes,' said Hazel. She remembered that Isidore was head of the Garden City firm of Schwartz Brothers, clothiers. She could recall some of the famous ads. 'Do you want to dress in style? Call on Isidore just back from Europe. He'll rig you out right. If you don't like his cut prices, say so, and he'll cut 'em a shade finer. Isidore wants *you*!'

Adolf became even more confidential.

'I worked for Schwartz Brothers. Isidore wasn't pleased when Rachel and me fixed it up to get married, but it tickled him to death when we named our boy after him. We're just pigging it at Aguila, but we shall win out.'

'I'm sure you will,' said Hazel.

She flitted from him to talk to Mrs. Burgard. She and the 'Professor' sat together, smiling frostily. As soon as Mr. Burgard had been presented, his wife said to Hazel :

'You asked me last Monday if there was a church in Aguila. Are you a church-member, Miss Goodrich ?'

Hazel said that she belonged to the First Presbyterian Church of Oakland. Mrs. Burgard purred :

'I'm pleased to know that. This is your first visit to these parts ? Yes. The Spragges are old-timers. George was a pupil of mine. Yes ; we mentioned that on Monday. I never did get a real good hold of George, but he's a fine young man. He wants only one thing—religion.'

Hazel said demurely :

'Isn't the ranch his religion ?'

'You never spoke a truer word, Miss Goodrich. I'm interested in George. He don't drink, nor gamble ; he's a good son.'

'Well-fixed, too,' observed Mr. Bungard gloomily. 'It ain't easy to make money in these foothills, or to keep it. George Spragge, and his father before him, have prospered.'

Adolf, unable to keep away from Hazel, joined in the talk.

'No hired help,' he said, with a gesture of his pudgy hands. 'Hired help eats up the profits. The Spragges run the ranch, and they make money out of everything on it. George is a money-maker.'

Mrs. Bungard sniffed.

Hazel said carelessly :

'Do you think Mr. Spragge could make money off the ranch ?'

What Adolf really thought will never be known. Naturally, he wished to make himself agreeable to the young lady who, presumably, was going to marry George. He replied warmly :

'Make money in Death Valley. *Anywheres!* It's a gift. I've got it, but then I'm a Jew. We keep our eyes peeled for small turnovers, so does George Spragge.'

Hazel's eyes sparkled.

'I've always told him,' continued Adolf, 'that he ought to buy an interest in some big outside business—cattle, horses, hogs. Chances lyin' around for any man to pick up.'

Hazel felt immensely uplifted. Adolf might look absurd in a white sheet and a silk hat, standing under a canopy, but in a grocery store nobody questioned his ability or, indeed, his honesty. Very soon he would move from Aguila to a small town, and thence on and on till he rivalled in prestige and wealth the tremendous Isidore Schwartz.

'You ought to tell Mr. Spragge that,' murmured Hazel.

'I have.'

The 'Perfessor' observed mournfully :

'George Spragge is obstinate.'

'Always was,' added the ex-school-marm.

## II.

The reek of the roasting beef began to tickle agreeably the nostrils of the company. By this time a large tablecloth was spread much after the fashion of modern picnics. Don Juan

Aguila and his contemporaries scorned such accessories as forks, plates, tablecloths, and napkins. Mrs. Spragge and Uncle Zed even now preferred to eat with their fingers, and refused somewhat tartly boned anchovies and liver-sausage. Samantha went round with a bucket full of *chiles rellenos*—green peppers stuffed with minced chicken and then fried in batter. Mrs. Spragge uncovered a huge jar of *salsa*, that pungent Spanish sauce cunningly compounded of tomatoes, onions, and red peppers. With this adventitious aid, immense quantities of barbecued beef would be consumed by the veterans.

Then George appeared with two long spits covered with smoking beef. The feast began.

Hazel told herself that it was Homeric, and said as much to Mr. Bungard, who alone of those present might be expected to appreciate the allusion. He looked less discouraged after tasting the *salsa*, but he and his wife ate sparingly, mindful of chronic dyspepsia, and casting disapproving glances at the Geldenheimers, who exhibited an almost criminal recklessness, consuming everything offered to them. The old Irishman, of course, was the life of the party, exchanging crusted jests with Uncle Zed and the Spragges. He affirmed that he was ready to go in bathing after the banquet. This was too much for Mrs. Bungard.

'A long time after,' she remarked solemnly. 'Three hours at least after eating such a meal as this.'

Presently, the talk soared into the condor's eyrie. Once more George was constrained to tell the story, punctuated by remarks from Samantha. She was wearing her white dress and looking her best, fired by a desire to rekindle sparks in George's breast—a forlorn hope truly!

'I'd like to see the nest,' said Mrs. Geldenheimer.

'That's easy,' replied George. 'Tain't more'n half a mile away. We kin walk along the shore, but the cliff kind o' hangs over. Ye'll hev to climb some.'

'I'm not much on the climb,' said Mrs. Geldenheimer.

'I'll climb,' announced Hazel.

'Kin you?' asked Samantha sharply.

Her eyes flashed an odd defiance. Hazel realised that this was a challenge.

'I can,' she replied quietly, 'and I shall.'

'I'll take keer of ye,' said George.

Everybody smiled discreetly, except poor Samantha.

In due time, the banquet came to an end. It was agreed that the national fête had been fittingly celebrated. The 'Perfessor' was called upon for a few remarks. He tweaked the British Lion's tail quite vigorously, much to the satisfaction of Pat Hennessy. Mrs. Bungard recited a 'piece' of her own composition into which she poured emotions denied expression in workaday life. Hazel sang three little songs to which George listened, squeezing himself with ecstasy. Her voice was small, of mediocre compass, but nicely trained. While Hazel was singing, Samantha closed her eyes, unable to bear the sight of Hazel's pretty face. She felt madly rebellious and wretched, thinking to herself that the city girl's graces and accomplishments had been paid for by the sweat of other folks. Why did parlour tricks impose upon stupid men? Even Uncle Zed had been captured. He was beating time to the lilt of the song, with a silly senile smile upon his wrinkled countenance. When Samantha opened her eyes, as the last soft note melted away, she saw that Mrs. Spragge had fallen asleep. A tiny ray of sunshine! Auntie was not to be flimflammed. Auntie knew!

### III.

About an hour later, they wandered across the dunes on to the clam beach. Mrs. Spragge did not accompany them, but refused peremptorily Samantha's offer to stay with her and clear up.

' You go and hav a good time,' she commanded. Then, reading the girl's thoughts, she said kindly: ' Never seen you look so purty as you did this afternoon.'

George led the way till they came to the rocks. It happened to be high tide. The big combers rolled in, breaking thunderously as they encountered the reefs. High above them hung the eyrie. Further advance across the wet, slippery, kelp-covered rocks became dangerous. Mrs. Goldenheimer exclaimed shrilly:

' You never climbed up there ? '

' Easy,' said George. ' Why, Samanthy got as far as the pinnacle. After that it's resky, because thar ain't good foothold.'

Adolf, practical in all things, but no climber, said with emphasis: ' What's the matter with a long rope, and descendin' to the nest ? '

George shook his head, explaining that such a descent would have been more perilous than the ascent, because the cliff was so high.

'Ever swung at the end of a long rope?' he asked.

'Not yet,' said Adolf, thinking of Judge Lynch. 'I'm a law-abiding citizen, I am. Beats me how you got there.'

'You come up to the pinnacle and see.'

'No, you don't, Adolf,' said Mrs. Goldenheimer sharply.

Adolf grinned.

'I'm ready,' said Hazel.

She had slightly raised her voice. Samantha alone observed this. A derisive smile flickered across her pleasant face.

'Come on!' said George.

The others, with the exception of Samantha, expostulated. George, however, laughed such protest to scorn.

'It's safe enough. Samanthy done it.'

Hazel divined that he wanted her to do it, that he was quite confident that she could do it. This confidence sustained her.

'It's nothing at all,' she declared.

'If she gits scared, she kin grab me. I'll go first; you tread where I tread. Look up, not down.'

At this moment Hazel appealed to Samantha.

'It is easy, isn't it?'

'I found it so,' replied Samantha. Then, some kindly impulse surged within her. She guessed that Hazel's courage was oozing from every pore; she divined an increasing nervousness. Hastily, speaking in a hard voice, because she was deeply moved, she said to Hazel:

'If I was you I'd not go. "Tain't quite easy coming down. If you ain't certain sure of not gittin' giddy, stay right here.'

Hazel hesitated, glancing round. Unhappily, she caught an expression upon Uncle Zed's face. Obviously he was saying to himself: 'Tain't a job for city madams.' George exclaimed impatiently:

'Samanthy's right. If yer scairt, say so.'

Hazel compressed her lips. What a stupid injunction! Did he want her to admit fear before all these strangers?

'I'm not scared,' she replied firmly.

George faced the cliff. The ascent was ridiculously easy at first. Hazel felt ashamed of her fears, and at the same time riotously glad because George alone seemed to have understood her better than she understood herself.

A minute later, an awkward corner of jutting rock had to be negotiated. But this, too, was quite easy. George slipped round

it, and extended a hand, telling her where to place each foot. She laughed gaily. George laughed too.

'Silly old hens down there,' he whispered. 'Cluckin' themselves into fits because a duck takes to water.'

'I feel quite safe with you, George.'

They climbed higher.

Suddenly the character of the rock changed. A stratum of shale presented itself. George moved horizontally, testing handhold and foothold. There was no danger, because the slope of the cliff was easy, but it became acute lower down. George began to make a path for his companion. Loose rocks tumbled into an unseen void. Hazel could hear them crashing down and down till they reached the water. She could hear also a queer sucking sound, the sob of the tide as it swirled in and out of a small cove.

'Feelin' all right?'

She ought to have answered 'No.' Somehow she couldn't admit defeat, even to herself, although her smooth skin had turned to goose-flesh.

'Quite all right,' she replied.

'Better rock now,' said George.

Hazel followed him in silence, concentrating her attention upon George's feet, looking neither up nor down. Once more, her fears vanished, a faint feeling of nausea went with them.

'Almost thar!' exclaimed George cheerily.

Two minutes later the pinnacle was reached. Hazel waved her handkerchief to those below, astonished to find how small they appeared. Between the pinnacle and the face of the cliff was a smooth flat rock. Hazel felt quite able to enjoy herself. The view across the ocean was superb.

'I'm ever so glad I came,' she said, moving nearer to him.

'You darling!' he murmured, seizing her hand.

She didn't repulse him. Unconditional surrender was inscribed upon her flushed face. He might have kissed her *coram publico* had he chosen. She wanted him to kiss her. She wanted to feel his great arms about her body, still panting after the long climb. They stood together poised, so to speak, between earth and sea and sky. And what was elemental in each clamoured for expression. Had he said: 'I want you madly; and I want Spragge's Canyon, and, by God! I'll have both,' she would have whispered back: 'Take me, upon your own terms. I am yours. I want you as you want me.'

Inexperience kept George tongue-tied. He was terrified of 'rushing things'; he held her hand, gripping it, but the only words that came from his trembling lips were:

'That's the eyrie.'

She looked up, returning the pressure of his hand. It seemed incredible that any creature not possessed of wings could have reached a spot so inaccessible.

'Tell it over again, now. Don't hurry! I want to know exactly how you did it. Oh, I am glad I came!'

He obeyed, thrilled by her beguiling tones. This was a big opportunity, so big that an ingenuous youth might be pardoned for seeing, or *sensing* only part of it.

'Like ter see me do it again?'

She gasped, gripping his hand fiercely.

'No, no. It would kill me. You were mad to run such risks, quite mad; but I'm glad you did it, because nobody else could.'

He told the story, somewhat perfunctorily, as if words bored him. But he grew excited, when he described the first step of the return journey, pointing to the crevice in the rock which his foot failed to find.

'I b'lieve,' he continued solemnly, 'that Samanthy saved my life. I was hangin' by my hands, and peterin' slowly out.'

'I envy Samantha,' said Hazel.

This time he understood. She was his for the asking, but time and place dismayed him. The others were looking on, beginning to wonder why they did not descend. Men who plough the earth, who reclaim the wilderness, find it easy to wait for the harvest. George glanced longingly at Hazel's lips, but he said firmly:

'We must git down.'

'I suppose so,' she murmured regretfully.

#### IV.

The descent began. Perhaps it was difficult for Hazel not to look down, because George went so slowly. She could see his feet, thrusting themselves into the loose shale, and at the same time the gulf beneath. Once more rocks splashed into the distant pool. Once more deadly nausea overwhelmed her. She stood still, trembling; perspiration broke all over her body, a cold clammy sweat.

'I can't go on,' she faltered.

George turned quickly, to behold a white convulsed face and piteous despairing eyes.

'Gee! Yer scairt!'

'I can't help it. I—I—'

She staggered, sky and sea were reeling together.

'Shut yer eyes,' commanded George sternly. 'I'll carry ye down.'

He did so. It was a wonderful feat of strength and endurance. Throughout that fearful descent, Hazel kept her eyes tightly shut, confident that George's foot would not slip. None the less, she realised, hearing his breath sob in his throat, what a burden she had become to the man who loved her, and she wondered how that knowledge affected him.

'It's all right,' he said hoarsely.

She felt solid rock beneath her feet. The others were cheering. As she opened her eyes, George sank in a crumpled heap at her side. Samantha ministered to him, bathing his head with sea-water, fanning air into his exhausted lungs. Hazel looked on, repeating miserably :

'I'm so sorry; I—I couldn't help it.'

Uncle Zed remarked sarcastically : 'Monkeyshines!'

Within five minutes George was laughing gaily. Hazel said to him :

'I wasn't scared while you were carrying me.'

'I was,' replied George. 'Never hev been so scairt in all my life!'

Mr. Bungard delivered himself :

'Not another man in this country could have done it, not one!'

'Pshaw!' said George.

'It's so,' said Samantha.

Adolf waxed enthusiastic also.

'Never knew the Fourth o' July pass off without some kind of trouble. There was that runaway buggy year before last.'

'Oh! Quit!' said George, blushing.

Adolf addressed Hazel :

'We'd a picnic on the top of the hill west of Aguila. Someway, a team got panicky. Fire-crackers, I dare say. They bolted. A woman was in the buggy. She grabbed at the lines, but they went overboard. George was standing near his saddle-horse. He was on it and after the buggy before you could wink. Had his riata

too. He lassed the off horse and stopped the whole caboodle within a few yards of a gulch.'

'Any fool could hev done it,' said George.

## V.

The great day ended tamely. Hazel's nausea returned, a mental affliction rather than physical. She had never felt so ashamed, so humiliated. Why had she allowed Samantha to bathe George's head? Why had she not torn off her own hat and fanned air into his lungs?

When the party broke up, George set about the chores; Samantha went to the corral. Mrs. Spragge, after listening grimly to the misadventure, returned to the kitchen. Hazel sought her room.

She lay upon the bed thinking hard. Passion had gone out of her small body, leaving it limp and listless. She wondered what George thought of her now. She imagined him saying: 'Gee! what a weight that little girl is!' The adoring look had disappeared from his eyes, because she had failed to 'make good.' At this dreary moment of supreme depression commonsense told her that she would go on failing to make good in most matters concerning the practical running of the ranch.

But presently her wits began to control her emotions. In crying need—for she was shedding tears—light once again illumined the darkness. By it, she glimpsed the weapon which had served her so well when driving back from Aguila—self-depreciation. If she made full confession to George, she would receive plenary absolution. Let weakness appeal to strength, womanhood to manhood. At the same time a conscience, intermittently sensitive, would be salved. She dried her eyes, bathed them in Cologne and water, and stared at her face in the mirror. A somewhat piteous image presented itself. Then she went downstairs. Standing upon the front porch, she could hear George whistling as he fed his hogs. She rushed up to him excitedly—

'Oh, George?'

'What is it?'

'I must tell you. I shan't sleep good till I do. I was terribly scared to-day, and I was scared when the brake gave, and scared when the squall caught us, and scared worst of all when I got lost. I pretended I wasn't, but I was. There!'

' Why not ? Puffec'ly nateral.'

' Please don't tell the others.'

' I'm mighty glad you told me, because '—his eyes twinkled—  
' I kind o' suspicioned it as I was carryin' you down the cliff. It  
worried me some that you did pretend with me. I'd as lief cut  
off my right hand as pretend with you. Tell the others ? Never.'

' I'll go back to the house, and let you finish your chores.'

' You hold hard. I've something to say. Let's go into the  
hay-mow. Full of sweet new-cut hay it is. We'll be ever so  
snug in thar.'

Immediately she began to tremble.

' Scared o' me ? ' he asked in some astonishment.

' George, dear, I'm scared of myself. Perhaps I can guess what  
you wish to say, but don't say it now.'

' Why—you poor little thing ! '

' I feel small enough,' she retorted. ' Have you quite forgiven  
me ? '

' There's nothing to fergive. Now, look ye here, when you're  
good and ready to listen to me, gimme the nod ! See ? I'm  
scared o' myself too, by Gum ! When we stood on the pinnacle,  
I—I—'

He paused, choked by emotion. Hazel felt awed, but she  
held up her hand, enjoining silence. Then she sped back to the  
house.

*(To be continued.)*



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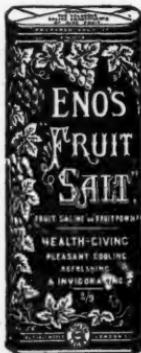
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